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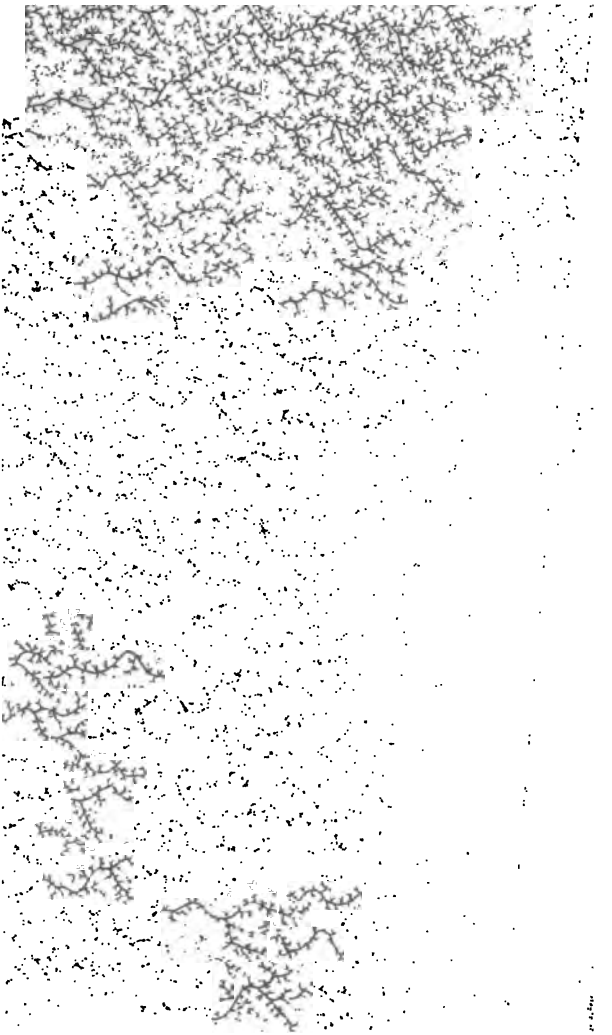

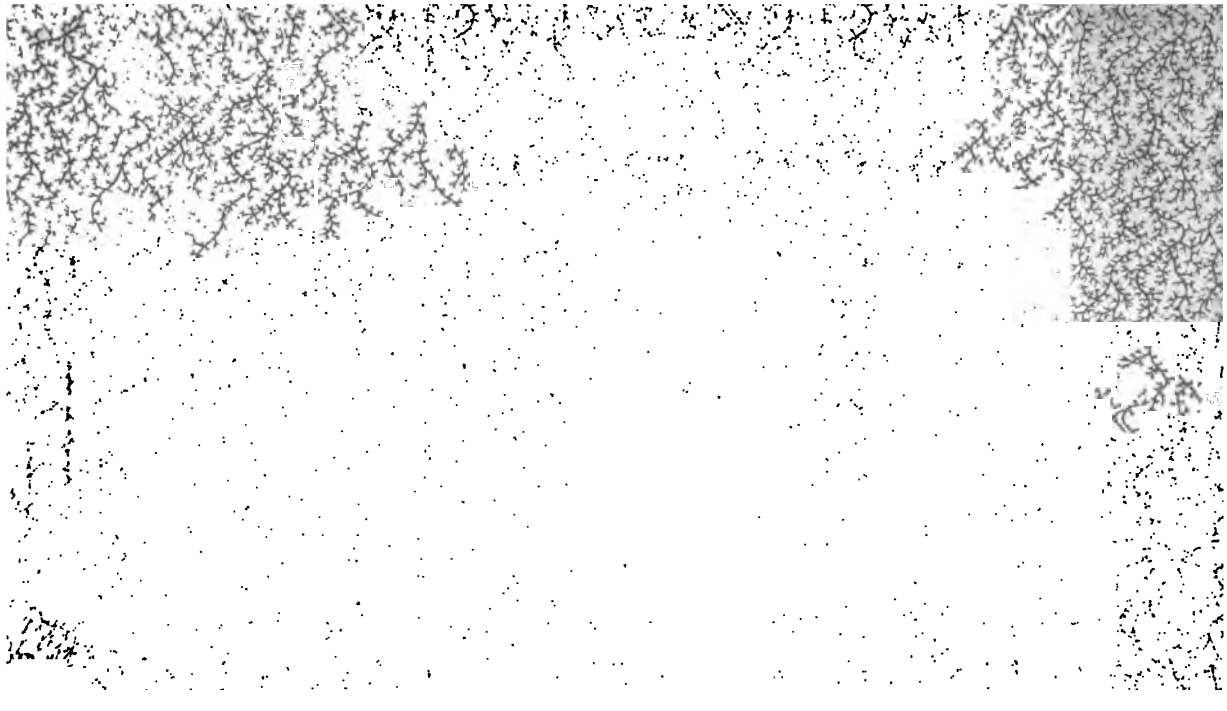

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BY THE

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WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY THE

REV. CHARLES SIMEON,
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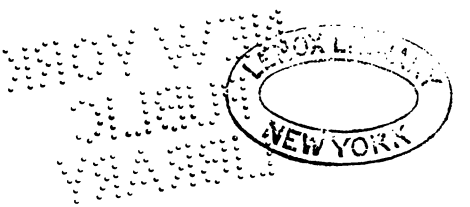

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

We can have derived but little improvement from our intercourse with the world, if we have not observed how rare an attainment self-knowledge is, and how superficial is men's acquaintance with their own hearts. This is an observation which every one makes in relation to others, whilst no one suspects its applicability to himself. In many cases we are perfectly astonished at the degree in which men are blinded, in reference to their own characters, which are as manifest to those around them as the sun at noon-day.

Now whence arises this? Every one knows what he does, and, to a certain degree, why he does it: and he has within himself such a knowledge of good and evil, as would suffice for forming, in some degree, a correct judgment, if only he brought his conduct fairly to the test. But there is in every one a principle of *self-love*, which indisposes him for exercising any great strictness, (we had almost said, any great degree of candour,) in scrutinizing his own habits.

We all like to entertain a good opinion of ourselves; and we give ourselves credit for meaning to do right, even though our conduct should not exactly approve itself to all who behold it. However severely we may judge others, we are sure to put a favourable construction on our own actions: and if others view them in an unfavourable light, we have reasons in plenty to urge in justification of them. If we cannot prove them altogether right in an abstract point of view, yet we maintain, that they were such as the occasion called for; or that, if there have been any thing wrong in them, the fault was, not in ourselves, but in those who, by their conduct or example, betrayed us into the error. In some cases, this is carried so far as to cast the blame even on God himself, rather than admit the criminality of our conduct in its full extent; as when men plead the strength of their passions as their excuse for their unlawful gratification of them. If constrained to acknowledge our faults in some respects, we assume a degree of merit to ourselves for not going to the extent to which others proceed in the very same ways; and we bring forward our virtues in other respects, to counterbalance our failure in the particulars referred to. Besides, we take care to put a good name upon those dispositions or habits which may have exposed us to blame. A man of a hasty, violent, and vindictive temper, thinks that he has a manly spirit, which is necessary to keep him from being trampled under foot. A covetous man, who thinks of nothing but amassing wealth, is actuated only (as he would have us suppose) by a prudent regard for the

welfare of his family. In this way, every excess is palliated at least, if not altogether justified. To such an extent do many deceive themselves in this matter, that they even value and congratulate themselves upon those very habits, which, in the eyes of more dispassionate persons, constitute their chief defects. What more common than to hear men boast of a line of conduct, which all but themselves see to have been altogether extravagant and unbecoming? We may have some idea of this by looking to the conduct of St. Paul, previous to his conversion. When persecuting the Church of God, he had no conception but that he was rendering to God a most acceptable service; just as bigots have done in every age; as our Lord has said, "Whoso killeth you will think that he doeth God service." The truth is, that self-love altogether blinds the eyes of men, and prevents them from discerning their true character.

Another source of the ignorance of which we are speaking is, that men are very *backward to self-inquiry.* In reference to worldly concerns men will exercise some degree of caution, to guard against any fatal mistakes. A general, in the vicinity of a hostile army, will have his picquets sent forth to watch his adversary, and to prevent surprise. A mariner, aware how much he may be driven out of his course by winds and currents, will make his observations, in order to ascertain his true position, and to pursue his destined course. A tradesman will examine his books, and balance his accounts, in order that he may know how to estimate the measure of his success.

But Christians, in the midst of enemies, and exposed to violent temptations, and having their eternal interests at stake, never think of setting aside a day for self-examination, and, perhaps, even in their whole lives, never spent one hour in prayer to God, to "search and try them, to see whether there were any wicked way in them, and to lead them in the way everlasting." We read of a Heathen, who every evening of his life, made a conscience of asking himself these questions:

Πῇ παρεζηλν; τι δ' ἐρεξα; τι μοι θεων οὐκ ἐτελεσσατε;*

But how few amongst those who bear the Christian name, examine thus carefully their *deviations* from duty, both in a way of *commission* and of *omission!* No, in truth; we have no jealousy over ourselves, no self-suspicion, no fear of self-deception. We take for granted that all is right. If our external conduct be tolerably correct, we never think of inquiring into the motives and principles by which we have been actuated; or of examining what mixture of alloy may have been blended with our best desires. If *appearances* are favourable, we care not much about the *reality;* and if any doubt arise in our minds, we rather turn our eyes from it, than make use of it, for investigating the inmost recesses of our hearts. It is no wonder, therefore, that persons should possess so little of self-knowledge, when they use not the proper and necessary means for the attainment of it.

* Wherein have I lived amiss? What have I done? What duty incumbent on me have I not performed?

Another cause of men's ignorance of themselves is, that they *never refer their conduct to a proper standard.* They take the opinions of men, and the habits of those around them; especially if they be of the same rank, and age, and under similar circumstances with themselves, as a fair criterion whereby to estimate their own character. What is done by those who are most respected in society, they imagine may well be done by themselves; and if a thing have been done by one who is looked up to as a religious character, they think that an ample vindication of themselves. They will not take the trouble to inquire into the circumstances under which the thing was done, or the motives and principles by which the person was actuated in doing it, or the difference of the motives or principles by which he himself is actuated. No: the "religious professor has done so; and therefore I may do so: he has done so on some particular occasion; and therefore I may do it every day of my life." A remarkable instance we have of this, in two of our Lord's apostles, who would have called down fire from heaven, to consume a Samaritan village, because the inhabitants had refused their Master admission into it: and, in favour of their design, they pleaded the example of Elijah, who had called down fire from heaven to consume two bands of soldiers that had been sent to apprehend him. They never considered, that Elijah was actuated, not by personal resentment, but by a concern for God's honour, and a desire that God would, by a fresh manifestation of his power, give still more convincing evidence to the persecut-

ing monarch, that he was opposing the only true and living God. The prophet had before called down fire from heaven, to consume his sacrifice; and as, in direct opposition to the convictions of his own mind, the wicked monarch still persisted in his endeavours to establish idolatry, and to extirpate the worshippers of Jehovah, he desired that they who were come to execute his impious commission, should themselves be made a sacrifice, for the conviction of the monarch's mind, and for the benefit of the whole nation. And the result of these very judgments showed how completely they answered the end for which they had been inflicted. But what sanction did this give to the cruel and vindictive spirit of the disciples? None at all: and therefore they received from their divine Master this just rebuke, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." But not unfrequently persons, at the very time that they condemn a thing, as done by a religious character, will plead the example in vindication of themselves; just as though the same conduct which is censurable in one, could be blameless in another, who was similarly circumstanced with himself.

But the truth is, that neither the opinions nor conduct of fallible men are any just criterion for *us*. We are to come to the written word of God, and to take that as our standard to which we should refer our every sentiment, and every act. We are told, on infallible authority, that "if we measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves amongst ourselves, we are not wise." If we would look to examples, as illustrations of the divine precepts, we should fix

our eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ and his holy Apostles, and see what was their mind, and spirit, and conduct under circumstances most resembling our own. But we do not like this high standard. We admire, indeed, what was done by *them;* but then we think, that, however commendable it was in *them*, it is not necessary for *us;* but that we are at liberty to take a lower standard for the regulation of ourselves. How is it possible then that we should attain self-knowledge, when we deliberately and habitually foster such delusions?

To these different causes of ignorance we may add another which is no less prevalent, namely, our *aversion to be told of our faults.* To those who will applaud and flatter us, we lend a willing ear: but if a man take us aside, and tell us our faults, what multitudes of excuses instantly arise in vindication of ourselves! Even truth itself shall be violated, rather than we will acknowledge the full extent of our criminality. And if this friendly office be repeated twice or thrice, we shall need nothing more to call forth a rooted aversion to our faithful monitor. If we were on the brink of an unseen precipice, or wandering by night in a trackless desert, we would bless the person who should warn us of our danger, or direct us in our path. But in every thing relating to morals, we would rather dispense with the services of others, and be best contented when most left to prosecute our own way.

Thus far we have spoken on the subject of self-knowledge generally, as it respects our *moral* conduct. But all which we have said, will have a yet

stronger bearing in reference to our *religious* character. We do not, nor will we, admit the claims which God has upon us as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier. Did we but take these into our consideration, what light would flash into our minds, and what views would we have of our extreme vileness! At present, any little regard for God, any faint acknowledgment of Christ, any transient compliance with the motions of the Holy Spirit, are judged quite sufficient to justify an approbation of ourselves. But if we considered how entire ought to be our devotion to God, how ardent our love to Christ, how simple and uniform our dependence on the Holy Spirit; if we kept in mind the diversified feelings and affections which the whole state of our existence calls for, and then marked the utter defectiveness even of our best frames, what should we think of ourselves? Should we find any ground for self-congratulation or self-complacency?

But instead of judging of ourselves in this way, we take some transient *emotion*, and construe it into a *habit;* or we take some small *attainment*, and regard it as an indication of true *conversion;* forgetting what joy the stony-ground hearers may feel, whilst yet "they have no root in them;" and what specious fruits the thorny-ground hearers may produce, whilst they "bring forth no fruit to perfection." To illustrate this—We read, that persons may give all their goods to feed the poor, and even their very bodies to be burned, and yet want that charity which is at the root of all acceptable obedience. Declare this to any such liberal and zealous man, and he will

conceive the admonition to be no ground for fear on his part, but only a demonstration of uncharitableness on yours. In a word, we consider not that gold itself requires to be both tried and purified: and till we learn that lesson, we can never know ourselves, or any thing else as we ought to know.

As we are about to introduce to the reader's acquaintance a book, which is admirably calculated to supply the want of which we have been speaking, we will just add a few remarks, in order to impress his mind the more deeply with the importance of attaining self-knowledge.

Without it, *we can form no just estimate of our own character.* This indeed is obvious: yet does it deserve especial mention, because the fruit of a tree does not more depend on the root, than every holy affection does on our views of ourselves as sinners before God. Neither repentance, nor love, nor gratitude, nor any other grace can flourish, where the heart is not first broken with a sense of sin.

Nor, without it, *can we have any proper views of God.* What idea can we form of his patience, and long-suffering, and forbearance, but in proportion as we know ourselves to be deserving of his wrath and indignation? How much less, then, shall we be able to appreciate his love, in sending his only dear Son to die for us, and his Holy Spirit to dwell in us, in order to restore us to his image, and to bring us safely to his glory?

Nor, indeed, without it, *shall we have suitable feelings towards man.* We are taught to "esteem others better than ourselves," and to "prefer others in ho-

nour before ourselves," and in every company "to take the lowest place." But how shall we comply with these directions, if we "know not the plague of our own hearts?"

But a deep acquaintance with our own hearts, whilst it produces contrition before God, will also inspire us with humility toward man; disarming injuries and insults of more than half their force, and disposing us to maintain only such a contest with him, as our God has maintained with us, "rendering good for evil, till we have overcome evil with good."

We must go farther still, and say, that without it *we have no real preparation of heart for the Gospel.* The Gospel is for those only who are sinful and undone. If instead of feeling ourselves "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, we conceit ourselves to be rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing," of what value will the Saviour be to us? It is only in proportion as we feel ourselves *lost*, that we shall desire a Saviour, or be willing to accept him on the terms proposed in the Gospel. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick:" and then only shall we take his prescriptions, when we are convinced in our souls that there remains for us no other hope of salvation.

We add, lastly, that without self-knowledge, *we have no meetness for the heavenly world.* Look at the whole heavenly choir, both of saints and angels: all of them are prostrate on their faces before the throne: the angels, from a sense of their nothingness as crea-

tures; the saints, from a consciousness of unworthiness as sinners. But neither will this creature-like spirit be in us, nor this sinner-like spirit, any farther than we are instructed in the knowledge of ourselves. We must be brought to see, that, irrespective of sin, we are "less than nothing, and vanity;" and that, as fallen creatures, we deserve nothing but the utmost abhorrence from our offended God. Then only are we meet for heaven, when with Job, from our inmost souls we cry, "Behold, I am vile;" and when, like him, we "abhor ourselves in dust and ashes."

Now, a book which opens and dissects the heart, we conceive to be of the utmost value to mankind. For it is not every writer, nor every preacher, that cultivates successfully this heavenly science.

There is even in the ministration of the Gospel itself, as it is too generally conducted, somewhat that is calculated to foster the delusions before-mentioned. For a general acknowledgment of our lost estate, is, by many, considered as a sufficient preparative for a reception of the Gospel; the healing balm of which is frequently applied, where there existed scarcely any wound or sense of malady. In many cases, the Gospel is brought forward, rather to silence than to deepen the convictions of conscience, and a blind kind of confidence is required in the place of saving faith. In many cases, the approbation of others is deemed a sufficient ground for the dismissal of all doubt and fear; and persons are led to estimate their own state before God, rather by the confidence maintained in their own

minds, than by any real change of their heart and life.

But even where the gospel is on the whole faithfully stated, and where experimental religion is held as of vital importance, it is not always that the heart is so portrayed as to produce in the hearers that species of self-knowledge, which we consider as most conducive to our spiritual welfare. There are some writers who seem to take pleasure in making the way to heaven so strait that scarcely any one can find it, or at least can have in his soul any satisfactory evidence that he has found it. Some of the American divines, in particular, have insisted on the necessity of our loving *God for his own sake*, irrespective of any sense of obligation to him for mercies received, or any hope of mercies yet in reserve for us. And many writers of our own draw such very nice distinctions, and refine so much the feelings of piety in the soul, and withal raise such a multitude of objections, and doubts, and fears, as to bewilder, rather than instruct, the simple mind.

There seems also to be sometimes a defect in the statements of Evangelical writers, that they confine their instructions too much to what we may call a sinner-like disposition, without going sufficiently to the root of our apostacy from God, or noticing in us the want of a creature-like feeling towards him. And this has arisen from their tracing our apostacy in the first instance to *unbelief*. But we think that all these defects will be found, in a great measure, obviated in the book which we take the liberty of recommending to the Christian public—Mr. WALKER'S

"CHRISTIAN." He traces the wickedness of mankind to *a spirit of independence*, which has led them to cast off God altogether, and to live without him in the world. This has given a peculiarly forcible turn to all his statements, wherein he marks the whole of our defection from God, in terms corresponding with his primary idea. And he does this, not so much by a reference to passages of Scripture, which might be thought overstrained, as by an appeal to our own judgment and conscience, which cannot but assent to every word he speaks. In his statements, too, there is a surprising depth; so that he appears as if he were acquainted with every motion of the heart. We are not aware of any writer that equals him in this respect. Others have their peculiar excellencies, in which they may surpass him; but in this, which is of primary and fundamental importance, if he do not surpass all, it may at least be said of him, that he is second to none. There is a very extraordinary force in his statements also, as arising from this circumstance, that he scarcely ever draws a character, without contrasting it with others which might be mistaken for it, and marking with astonishing precision every variety of disposition and feeling which shall distinguish it from those characters to which it is most nearly allied. Suppose, for instance, he portrays the feelings of a careless sinner under any circumstances, he brings into view the feelings of one who gives himself credit for a religious turn of mind, and shows how small the difference between them is, in the sight of God; and then marks how wide the

distance of both of them is, from that which characterizes the truly pious soul. In fact, for the attainment of self-knowledge, we cannot but recommend this book as of singular value. And as it is free from that species of phraseology with which many religious books abound, we cannot but look upon it as pre-eminently fit to be put into the hands of those who are liable to be offended by the use of particular expressions, and who are sufficiently thoughtful to investigate and digest the salutary truths contained in it.

C. S.

Cambridge, February, 1825.

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TO THE

INHABITANTS OF TRURO.

My Dear Friends,

I have ventured, at the instance of some pious Christians, to make public the following Discourses, which were originally intended for your service only. The matter of them, at least, is of vast importance, and such as it ought to be my first concern that you may be experimentally acquainted with. I thought it therefore advisable to send them forth to the world with a Dedication to you; that whilst by this means I should have an opportunity of acknowledging the obligations you have laid on me, and, in some sort, of testifying the respect I bear you, I might also, in a way hardly yet attempted by me, endeavour to engage your regards to that "one thing," which in a few years we shall all discover to be indeed "the only thing needful."

Brethren, if my heart's desire towards you, that ye may be partakers of Christ, makes me earnest and importunate, is there not a cause, seeing your happiness and my own are at stake? I would not that any one of you should "come short of entering into God's rest." Nor can I forget the ministerial vows that are upon me, and how fearful my doom,

if any of you "die in your sins," without warning. For your sakes and my own, then, I beg leave to recommend to you this labour of love.

It is the character of a CHRISTIAN, drawn as faithfully as I have been enabled to do it from the Holy Scriptures. It is not indeed a character which will suit the generality of those who call themselves by that name. Perhaps, also, it may make some, who have formed too favourable an opinion of their religious conduct, to be disgusted with themselves or it. But if vital Christianity be either run down by the torrent of infidelity and licentiousness, or be dwindling into a ceremonial form, in the practice of the few who live decently, and are well spoken of, it becomes the "stewards of the mysteries of God" to rise up to its rescue. It is this has engaged me to present that to you in *description*, which is but too rarely to be seen in *life*. That it may be made an instrument in the hands of the Spirit, of forming you after its likeness, is my first and most earnest desire. And should God vouchsafe to grant this blessing upon my attempt, to you and others, it will be my highest comfort, and an encouraging answer to the prayers and labours of,

Your affectionate Servant in Christ Jesus,

SAMUEL WALKER.

Truro, May 22, 1755.

PREFACE,

BY THE

Rev. THOMAS ADAM of Wintringham.

As the following Sermons are excellently calculated to promote vital Christianity, by illustrating the means and necessity of a real inward change, or the recovery of man from his present state of gross insensibility under the fall, to a life of acquaintance and communion with God; it is hoped they will be well received by serious persons of all denominations: and, with the divine blessing, answer the Author's design, in rousing the stupid sinner, undeceiving the formalist, and animating men of good-will to higher attainments.

If the single point insisted on in the first Sermon, namely, the deep guilt of an apostate, independent will, was duly attended to, it might be a means of checking many of the careless, giddy tribe, in their mad career of selfishness, and sensual pleasure; and perhaps awaken some startling thoughts concerning natural corruption, in the breast of the more cool objector to revelation in general. A rational creature, made to be happy by knowing and loving God, and a steady conformity to his will, and yet turned from

him in the bent of its will and affections, and seeking after happiness in opposition to him, is a monster in nature. Do but allow the fact, which is sufficiently confirmed by the experience of all ages, and the confession of the best men that ever lived, and we need look nowhere else than to this poisoned fountain of a selfish, corrupt will, for the vanity and wretchedness of our state. It may justly be questioned, whether there can possibly be two kinds of happiness in nature, and whether God can conceive or produce a happiness different from, and much less opposite to his own. If then the happiness of God springs from, and is one with the perfect rectitude of his will, and there can possibly be no happiness in any part of creation but according to his idea and standard of it, the necessary consequence of a rebellious departure from the sovereign will which made and governs the universe, must be perpetual error, and certain misery. And though God in mercy may instruct, admonish, bear with, and use all suitable methods to reclaim his perverted creatures from their foolish wanderings, and bring them back again into the one sole road of order and happiness, yet he has not the power, if he could have the will, to make them happy out of it.

The disputer of this world thinks it too great a stoop of majesty, for God to become man, that he might accomplish the work of our redemption; and cries out, not with pious admiration, but in the self-sufficiency of his reason, What is man that thou shouldst so regard him? And the willing slaves of sin, as well as those who are engaged in a continual round of what is called innocent pleasure, or worldly

business, and who abandon themselves with full relish to the comforts of the animal life, without understanding and seeking after God, take refuge in mercy, and make it the first, if not the only article of their creed; meaning by that, a power or will in the Most High to dispense with truth and justice, in order to suit their case, and sneering at the horrid word, damnation. But the answer to both is, that the recovery of self-conscious intelligent beings, from a state of enmity and rebellion against their Maker, and their eternal happiness or misery, is no trifle with God, though it is with man.—That if help was wanted, it would be offered; and when it was, we might well suppose it would be in a way far exceeding our natural thoughts and apprehensions.—That the greatness and mysteriousness of the deliverance, shows dreadfully the greatness of our danger, and the infinite malignity of that disposition in man which required it.—That it comes to us in the way of a cure; and as restoration of health to the soul.—That our great spiritual disorder, terrible corruption, and absolute incapacity for happiness, is the aversion of our wills from God, and opposition to him in self;—and that if we reject our remedy, by refusing to return to an union of will with him, there is no such resource of mercy in his nature as we vainly dream of: we have the essence of misery in ourselves, and by our own obstinate choice of it, put an eternal bar to his goodness.

I suppose Christ has given us sufficient intimation of the state we are in, and carries us to the root of our distemper, when he teaches us to pray, "*that God's will* may be done in earth, as it is in

heaven;" and charges us to "deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of him that sent him;" nay, tells us, that "whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be his disciple." Does not this seem a grievous, hard saying to thee? Art thou unwilling to cross thy desires, and give up all thy worldly views of profit or pleasure for the will of God? Deceive thyself no longer; trust not in an outward civility, nor any kind of life, whether in religion or in the world; thy sin is found out for thee. Thou mayest see in this glass wherein thou "comest short of the glory of God"—of glorifying God by a profound submission to his will, which is his glory in and from man;—and what is the true cause of every other sinful exorbitance in thee.

And therefore I cannot but think, that the Author has judiciously singled out this capital instance of man's corruption, an usurping will, broken off from God, to draw our thoughts as it were to a point, and strike conviction into the soul; as well as justly represented the guilt, and fatal consequences of it. If the charge is false, we have comparatively no sin: the love and practice of every virtue being implied in the contrary disposition. But if it is true, and we are not in subjection to the Father of spirits, adoring his nature and will, pleased with his commands, and resigned to his providences, the word of truth has but one call for us, "Repent, and be converted." Whatever we pretend, or however we may appear outwardly to men, so long as there is this root of a secret enmity against God in the heart, an ali*enated, self-pleasing*, opposing will, we dishonour

him in the whole state of our lives, and the whole course of our beings; we can have no communion with him here, nor enjoyment of him hereafter.

The peculiar doctrines of the gospel are easily connected with, and follow close upon this discovery. Guilt incurred, punishment due, and infinite justice demanding it, what shall ward off the blow? Repentance, and return to God:—So unbelieving man says; making a merit of it; supposing that he has the power to repent and return, in and of himself; and that whenever he does, God must receive him to favour. But these are dangerous suppositions to trust to for eternity; and utterly insufficient to relieve the conscience, labouring under a sense of guilt, and looking out every way for some better ground of hope. I will venture to say, it is hardly possible for the convinced awakened soul to trust to them; and I fear those who do, have another secret suppo sition in reserve, which is, that sin is not of so deadly a nature, nor so odious to God, as it must be upon the Christian scheme. A real belief of the guilt and danger of it, will necessarily be attended with alarming apprehensions of the defectiveness of repentance, of its insufficiency, at the best, for satisfaction, and of our impotence to good in the future course of our lives. And this sense will dispose, if not force us to receive the much-wanted, friendly aid of revelation; and to form our conduct upon the notion of a SCRIPTURE GOD, instead of one of our own making. For notwithstanding the boasted perfection of human reason, and our conceited, arrogant pretences to supernatural knowledge, God will *always be unknown*, as to his counsels, ways, and

actings, if he does not reveal himself. The description given of him, "as forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and yet by no means clearing the guilty," exceeds all the understanding of the natural man; and would still have been a mystery, if Christ had not explained it, by bearing our sins in his own body, reconciling us to God by his death, bringing in a perfect righteousness for us, enabling us by his Spirit to subdue the power of sin in ourselves, and completing our redemption by making us "new creatures," fit for heaven.

These great points are clearly opened, and pathetically enforced in the following Discourses; which we doubt not will be generally considered as the result of experience, answerable to their title, and a fair draught of the Christian. And if the author should be remarked by any as one of the over-doers, hurting the cause he would serve; let him be entitled to no apology, if he has gone beyond the rule of Scripture: which indeed prescribes an amazing height of purity for such a weak and sinful creature as man; but is nevertheless necessary to be proposed to him in its full extent, to convince him of his sin, bring him to Christ, direct him in his aims, prove his sincerity, and quicken his endeavours. And to speak only of an absolute submission to the will of God, who will presume to affirm that less is required of us? It would be an ill office in a Christian divine, to tell men exactly where they may stop without hazard; and he would have but little thanks for his pains from zealous persons, endued from above with a true spiritual taste, whose state is progressive, *and their hearts bent* upon continual advancement in

holiness: which is what his description of the "new creature," implies; and not that none can be saved who come short of it, provided they are going on to perfection, and trust not in themselves, but in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It must be confessed, he is somewhat plain, does not palliate matters, bears hard upon the old man, and strips him of all his disguises. And therefore it may be supposed, that some, who have been used to prop themselves with the false divinity of their moral character, and a decent conformity to the external parts of religion, will be offended. This he knew very well, and that his hardest work would be with those who will let religion do any thing with them but change their hearts, and alter the earthly bent of their affections. And that there are such at all times in Christian countries, pretenders to godliness, but in the main opposers of the reality of it, and the bitterest enemies, of all others, to those who would lead them into that depth and mystery of iniquity, their own heart, is not to be denied. But whoever thou art, sinner or formalist, be so just to thyself, and to thy eternal interest in the Saviour, as to read what is here offered thee without prejudice, if not with good will, to one whom thou must acquit in thy conscience of any design but good will towards thee. And if the formalist, especially, should be disgusted at the home expostulations upon his case, and more inclined to reject them with disdain, than to take occasion from them to enter upon an impartial examination of himself, let him be assured, that he has just cause to suspect that all is *not sound with him* at the bottom.

And let all watchful improving Christians, who know their want of deliverance, their disability in their natural state, and want of merit in their best, Christ's power and will to save them to the utmost in all respects, their willingness to be saved by him, faithful adherence to him, and faithful co-operation with the Spirit of holiness for a renewed will, and a sanctified heart, choosing God for its portion, and seeking his kingdom and righteousness in the first place; let them, I say, bless God for the light and spirit of the Author, and pray with me that he would raise up, every-where, such painful labourers and faithful stewards of the word of life; and that they may be blessed with a measure of success, as he is in his ministry at Truro; and it is reasonably presumed, will be in other places, by the publication of these discourses, as the first impression of them has been so quickly sold off.

One thing more is humbly submitted to the reader's consideration, namely, whether the points of man's sin and guilt, restoration by grace, acceptance through Christ, and the necessity of spiritual renovation, are not fairly reasoned; and whether, though not discoverable by human wisdom, yet, when revealed, they do not come within our capacity of judging, and recommend themselves to our belief and approbation? And what I would observe upon it is, that it is doing unspeakable mischief to the Christian religion, to distinguish those who, either from principle or compliance with the corrupt taste of the age, soften, or too generally suppress these points, by the name of Rational Divines.

SERMON I.

THE SINFULNESS AND MISERY OF MAN.

PSALM xiv. 2, 3.

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: There is none that doeth good, no not one.

WITH whatever degree of coolness and insensibility the present high privileges and the eternal glorious promises offered in the gospel, may now be received; yet there have been times, when Christianity held an honourable dignity in the eye, and carried a reviving joy into the heart. But in our day, "the God of this world," seems to have blinded men's eyes, and hardened their hearts: they have little pleasure in his beauty, who is "fairer than the children of men;" nor do they find the gospel of his lips to be full of grace. The king is come bringing salvation; he is come in the name of the Lord to "preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." But

where are the knees and hearts of his people? where "the children crying Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?" We name ourselves after the name of Christ; but interest, pleasure, and vanity, have gained to themselves our allegiance and devotion. Here we can "bow down and worship," with eager importunity; here we can amuse away life; here, calmly steal into grey hairs and the grave: but should we invite men by the mercies of the Lord; should we go about to engage them by a full display of that excellent love of God, which is manifested in Jesus Christ, to beseech them by the dignity of Christ's person, and by the sufficiency of his power to every purpose of their salvation; should we strive with them that they would lay hold of this everlasting life, dearly purchased, and freely offered; who is there almost that would lend an ear? Men are careless and asleep: security, the offspring of pride, ignorance, and hardness of heart, hath shut them in as with a fenced wall of brass: God is left "far above out of sight;" and every awful consideration of duty, gratitude, and true interest, due to him, is negligently cast behind their backs.

With what confidence then can I address you upon the glorious blessings of the gospel salvation; lay before you the way of life, and mark out the evidence upon which you may set up a claim to God's favour through the Redeemer! I shall only speak into the air, only gratify your curiosity, only engage your imagination, and amuse you with an entertainment of an hour, "as one that hath a pleasant voice,

and can play well on an instrument;" unless you be deeply impressed with the importance of the matter; and enter into an inquiry after the things that make for your peace, as if it were for your life. If you will profit by the following discourses, you must not be of the faithless stamp of the times; you must at least have this preparation of mind, a serious concern about salvation. And I will not believe, that you are so without understanding, whatever you are, however heedless and wilful in your sins, as to have determinately given over all care for your soul. I will hope, that somehow or other I shall, by divine grace, reach your heart, and move you to some awakened reflections upon that which concerns you more than a thousand worlds. Nay, I will be confident, that I shall be heard of many who desire to "know the certainty of the words of truth;" and would "examine themselves whether they be in the faith."

It is not my business to please men; and therefore, if you shall be detained with a subject which must of necessity prove very offensive to human pride, altogether opposite to worldly views, and destructive of carnal indulgence, see that ye be not offended. "Christ's kingdom is not of this world." He hath no offers to make, which invite by the indulgence they give to vanity, grandeur, and ease. Just the contrary: his invitations are spiritual and eternal; nor can they be relished, till a man "deny himself, mortify his affections which are upon earth, and crucify the flesh." Him that is such a one, Christ will visit with his consolations. Such a one

shall receive out of Christ's fulness, peace, acceptance with God, and sanctification; with help in every time of need against the enemies of his soul, in the present life; and in that which is to come, a glorious rejoicing in the great day of the Lord Jesus, and an inheritance in the eternal kingdom. It is my design, in this and some following discourses, to give you an account of the gospel salvation, and to lead you either to seek or discover an interest in Jesus Christ. What I have to advance hereupon, will divide itself into two principal particulars; each of which will demand some larger measure of your attention and time. They are FAITH, and the NEW CREATURE; which, together, will comprehend the sum of gospel salvation.

The former of them is FAITH. And this it will be my endeavour to illustrate in such a manner, that while ye shall see what faith is, ye may be able to prove yourselves, if in this way ye are seeking God; and, if ye are out of it, ye may know the measures to be taken in order to a right faith in Jesus Christ.

You must suffer me here to use great freedom of speech; to charge you with sin, in behalf of the Majesty of heaven; and to remonstrate with you upon the sad consequences which your sin has drawn after it:—I must be allowed to tell you, that these consequences it is not in your power to remove:—After this, my message will be more agreeable, in the declaration of Christ's ability and willingness to succour you:—And the conclusion will be, an account of faith.

Let me engage you to remark the near connexion there is between these several points. Sin hath brought man into a ruinous state; out of this state man cannot help himself: Christ offers him rescue; and with this offer man must comply, if he will be delivered.

To lay the ground-work, I must, in the first place, be free to charge you with sin, in behalf of the Majesty of heaven; and then will remonstrate with you upon the sad consequences which your sin has drawn after it. And the words of the Psalm read for the text, give me foundation enough for the general charge and expostulation I have to make. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men; to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doth good, no not one."

One indeed there was in our nature, who might boldly say, "Who convinceth me of sin?" "You see my manner of life; you know my actions: tell me wherein I have broken the least commandment; wherein, in the nicest particular, I have neglected what God would have me do, or done what he forbids. Not one among you can convince me of sin: No, ye blasphemers; nor can your 'father the devil.' He tried all his arts upon me: but no carnal appetite, no proud imagination, no covetous, ambitious desire, could be found in me. Yea, my heavenly Father, who knoweth the very secrets of the heart, hath found no wickedness in me. He hath honoured me by a voice from heaven, declaring his pleasure in

me; because he knoweth, that as I am come to do his will, so I keep his sayings." Thus he might set up a claim to purity of heart and integrity of life; and neither God, nor man, nor devil, could disallow it. But every other mouth is stopped. God charges sin against us all. Alas! so many iniquities are gone over our heads, that I am at a loss wherewith to begin the black catalogue.

But where shall I begin the accusation, unless with that which is the root of all the rest? "Your soul hath been without the disposition of a creature, and hath affected independency." This is my charge in God's behalf against you all; ye have had a pleasure and a will within you, not subordinate to the will and pleasure of God.

"Let all things serve God," is the one equitable law of the universe. For he is "our Father, and we all are the work of his hands." Nay, but mark the design of our being, he "made all things for himself," he "created us for his glory," he "formed us" that we should "show forth his praise." There must be but one king and one pleasure in all the world. Every inferior being must be subject to the supreme will of God; so the order of creation demands. But apostate angels first affected to have a will of their own; to erect a pleasure within them, not subordinate but opposite to the good pleasure of God. Thus rebellion was conceived against the divine will; and among the creatures in heaven, many vainly aspired to be independent of the Creator. Man, too, has trod in the same steps: all of us have a will of our own, which opposes the sovereign will of God.

In proof of this I must appeal to yourselves. Was there not a time, when your heart knew little fear of God's displeasure; when you were insensible of his presence; unmoved with any awful apprehensions of his majesty, untouched with any feeling of love towards him, wherein "God was not in all your thoughts?". Say, hath not God seen you in such a state? if it be not now your very condition? Have not days and years gone over you, wherein the Searcher of hearts, considering your soul, might find nothing there but a horrid forgetfulness of your Maker; not so much as a desire to serve him, and submit to his pleasure; when you lived at your discretion, not caring for God, and carried on by inclinations which were directly contrary to his law? I speak not now of what you did; I intend not one action or another which were sinful; it is not in question at present, whether you were lewd or chaste, drunken or temperate, a knave or honest, a trifler or diligent; my charge against you is, that in those days, whatever you did, you did what you would, and because you would; you were pleasing yourself, and not God; you had not a creature-like regard to him in your conduct. Be faithful for God, though it be against yourself: had you at that time any real concern about the will and pleasure of him that made you? Had you either thought or design of pleasing God?

True, you considered not in those easy days that you were acting that monstrous part you did; you reflected not, that to forget, to cast off God, and do as we list, carries in it all the foul sins of ingratitude,

undutifulness, rebellion; that you were degrading the Almighty from his throne, and placing yourself in his stead. If you will look well to it, you shall find no other sin like this. The stubbornness of children, the negligence of intrusted servants, the unfaithfulness of most obliged dependents, the disloyalty of chief favourites, and whatever else supposes insensibility, obdurateness, and treachery, is implied in this one thing; a careless forgetfulness of God.

Or suppose, through the peculiar blessing of a pious education, you "have remembered your Creator from your youth;" yet have you found no inclination within you to cast off the yoke? No risings of a will of your own against the will of God? Hath there not been something in you which would plead for a dispensation of the commandments of God? Something which hath made you ready to murmur at God's providential directions; and to be displeased with the spirituality and strictness of the law? Consider the passages of your heart, what they have been, and what they too often are; and you shall readily confess the universal truth, that "the heart of man is desperately wicked," even "enmity against God," although you were never numbered with that more insolent tribe, "who say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy way. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"

Alas! what a sight must a world of such self-willed rebels have been in the eye of God! A world of creatures, "turned every one to his own way." And such have you been, whatever you are,

you are joined in the general apostacy. O let us all feel and own the never-enough to be lamented truth; all of us are rebels and apostates! This is the evil stock, which hath put forth its branches, and yielded its fruit in a variety of sin.

Being set up for yourself, you were impatient of God's providential government of you.—When he smote you with his gracious and well-designed afflictions, you were fretful: you acknowledged not his hand, nor his goodness in them; but, disordered in your ungentle spirit, you wreaked that peevish anger upon those about you, which you durst not discharge against God. You must have your own will and way: when you found not compliance in others, you grew haughtily enraged or sullenly displeased; when disappointment met you in your worldly projects, or carnal joys, or even innocent amusements, the troubled sea of discontent was within you; you could not endure the least opposition with patience, as if you had been the Lord of the universe, and all things were to be devoted to your humour.

God being forgotten, you "minded earthly things," the favour of men, and the wealth of this world: in quest of praise, you were fawning and deceitful; in search of wealth, you were sordid and selfish. Reputation and wealth made you proud and vain; and that pride and vanity would endure no rival: you must be the foremost in abundance and respect. Hence your heart was filled with envious disgust and malicious pleasure, as others outstript or fell beneath you in these your favourite pursuits.

Meantime, that delicate body of yours was craving for indulgence. The eye, the ear, the palate; every sense lusted for its peculiar gratification. Your soul was carnal. You were but a beast with more refinement; may I not add, with more luxury too?

You must own now, that your inward parts have been very wickedness; that God hath seen your soul without the disposition of a dependent creature; that you have had an indisposition of spirit, either to do his will, or to submit yourself and your affairs to his ordering; that your love hath been laid upon present enjoyments, in the pursuit of which you have been proud, envious, malicious, deceitful, and selfish; that lust or indulgence hath taken place of spiritual and reasonable gratifications within you, rendering your soul insensible to every thing, but the enjoyments of the lower part, of which you are composed. Such was the disposition of your soul. And how filthy and defiled then were you! What a sight in the pure eye of God! And judge now what the fruit of so corrupt a tree must have been.

Surely all the outward carriage could have nothing of worth in it. Whatever was the issue in the thoughts, words, and actions, it was but the way of one who knew not God. There might be a regularity free of scandal; a form there might be of godliness; but since the principles of the heart were thus corrupted, nothing which proceeded out of it could do other than offend God. And what a load of guilt must you have contracted, while you were thus trading and living in a state of sin, all within and without evil continually. Consider what a heavy

charge God hath against you for those rebellious days of your life, when you were not serving him, but following your own lusts.

From this general accusation, should I descend to particulars; should I charge you with the acts of sin, which have been compassed and contrived in your own heart, without being brought forth into outward conduct, how would time and calculation fail to bring before you the incessant actings of pride and impatience, of hatred and resentment, of envy and malice; the ceaseless contrivances for worldly honour and wealth; the projects which have passed through your mind, for the enjoyments of pleasure and lust! Ah, how would you sink under the condemnation, could you see only the sin which hath been committed in your own heart, in desire and purpose, but was prevented in the practice and execution! Might I herewith also draw into one view all the sins of your life, such as the heedless discharge of the peculiar duties of your station, and the repeated omissions of them; the hour vainly squandered, and the talents sacrilegiously misapplied; the scandalous submissions and bowing the neck to human favour, and the irrecoverable opportunities you have lost of glorifying God, and benefiting your neighbour. In a word, the many leanings and approaches to grosser acts of sin, and the repeated commission of those acts themselves, of whatever kind, together with the aggravations attending them; their having been done against knowledge and conscience: should I be able to draw up this charge and catalogue of actual sins *against you, con*fusion must needs cover your face,

and you would see your "iniquities increased over your head," and your "trespasses grown up unto the heavens."

Let conscience speak; and how great will the sum of your sins be! But however multiplied and aggravated your trespasses are, place them all to the account of that undutiful and apostate spirit which possessed you, your own usurping will and pleasure. This was the fountain that sent forth all these bitter waters. This hath been the foundation of all the other evil dispositions of your heart, and of the various acts of iniquity which lie against you; even this forgetfulness of God as your Creator. It is this which hath frustrated the end of creation, dishonoured God, provoked him to displeasure, and placed man at a distance from his God and happiness. And here you are but one of the many, but one among the whole race of men, all of whom have been found in the same apostacy you are charged with. For "all are gone out of the way: all are become filthy." Wherefore, they and you together, as making up a "world lying in wickedness," have the greatest need to weigh with an awakened attention, the sad consequences of such a revolt from, and rebellion against, the majesty of the Almighty.

And the consequences thereof are these three just now hinted at.—Hereby dishonour is brought upon God's government; man is sunk into a state of unfitness for God and happiness; and a sentence of wrath is gone forth against the world.

The *first* of these consequences is, that by the

sin of man, dishonour is brought upon God's dominion and government. God said, "Let us make man: It is my sovereign pleasure, that man should be. Let him live, and I will reign over him; let him do my will; let him execute my pleasure. I will be known in this earth which I have made." Such was the great and gracious design of the eternal God; such, the end of man's creation. But see now, how little this design is answered; yea consider, if God be acknowledged as "the great king over all the earth." Where is the hearty willing submission of his creatures? Where the delightful attendance upon his honourable service? It is nowhere to be found. To the disgrace of his majesty and glory, God hath utterly been deprived of his dominion and rule; is not avowed by the children of men, as the wise and mighty Lord, as the kind and most affectionate parent. His sovereignty is disallowed; man hath forsaken and forgotten him. All sense of obligation to him hath ceased; all duty hath failed; all dependence hath been rejected. God hath been left by us to his heavens and his angels, nor known upon earth to be what he is. War, as it were, hath been declared against him; every-where, and by every one of us, he hath been robbed of his dominion; and man hath set up for the Lord of the world. And what other dishonour could we possibly have brought upon God, than by this apostacy? Proud man! thou couldst do no more than this, against thy Maker: thou couldst not think of setting up thy puny arm against the strength of the Almighty;

thou couldst not hale him out of his heavens; but all which thy little insolence could do, thou hast done. Thou hast forgotten him, deprived him of his dominion over thee; thou hast caused him to be unknown in this earth, which his hands have made; thou hast stubbornly opposed thyself to his will. And what wouldst thou do more to his dishonour? It is not in thine hand to dishonour him more. Oh, how must the faithful holy angels look upon such a world as this? What resentments must they feel for the glory of their God, so vilely trampled upon! Burning with a sacred zeal for the injured dignity of their God, have they not been ready to cry out, "Arise, O God! plead thine own cause!" "See how foolish man reproacheth thee daily!" "Arise, and let thine enemies be scattered!" This is the first sad consequence of sin, the disgrace it brings upon God as the Governor of the world.

The *second* event of man's apostacy is, that he is left in a state of unfitness for God and glory. "In thy presence is fulness of joy," said David. Doubtless there is so, not only in heaven, but even here; for David spoke from experience; he found God's "favour to be life," his "loving-kindness to be better than life itself." But then, neither in time nor eternity, can there be a capacity for this joy, unless the will of man be in conformity with, and subjection to, the will of God. Without this, there can be no "entering into the joy of the Lord." I can easily conceive of the full joy of those blessed angels, who, always beholding the

face of God, "do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." But if one malignant spirit were among them, who affected independency, whose will drew, in the least degree, contrary to God's pleasure; sure I am, he must be a stranger to the joy of heaven. Nay, did any of them come short of an entire, free, and full submission of spirit to God's will, in any the least measure, such must so far fail of tasting the "pleasures at God's right hand." Now, in this respect, there is no difference between angels and us. An obedient spirit, an unreserved submission of soul to God's will, is the only qualification for happiness in us, as well as in them. But you have seen how you have been without such a frame of soul; and, if you are returning to your duty, you cannot but lament how you still fall short of an entire conformity of your will to God's. Man's selfish will directs him to a choice which is far distant from God and happiness. You have chosen your own glory, and your own pleasure; have been intent on seeking human praise, and bodily indulgence: and have been pursuing earthly things, whether the wealth, the opinion, or the honours of the world, in order to gratify your vanity and your lust. Your will and choice hath been thus downward; directly contrary to that full and entire choice of God's service and glory, which can only make you meet for his presence. But can these things, which the perverted will of man hath made its choice; can these present gratifications, upon which man hath set his heart, afford him happiness? Can the praise and ap-

plause of men, those bubbles which a breath of air both swells and bursts; can the highest-fashioned elegancies of bodily indulgence; can wealth and worldly honour, bring real and solid content to the soul? Let the daily complainings of the most prosperous; let the unsatisfiedness of those who enjoy pleasure in the largest share; let the restlessness of spirit within, while all is favourable without; let all this witness, that mistaken man seeks blessedness where it cannot be found. Or say, you should be happy, as your heart can wish, all the days of your life; yet, when your sun declines, and is set in the great ocean of death, what qualification would you have about you, for the other and eternal world? Alas! a proud, earthly, carnal mind, is not meet for the company, the praises, the services of heaven. Men may talk of the mercy of God, and conceive of being admitted to heaven, after all their carelessness and sinful courses; but if heaven be the enjoyment of God, and the business of it his service, he whose heart is its own master, and who affects not spiritual gratifications, would find the sight of God to be terrible, and his service the most grievous slavery.

It is not, therefore, among the least of the evil consequences which sin hath brought after it, that it hath set you at variance with God. Perhaps you may be easy enough for the present, and be now insensible to any hurt you receive, through the want of an obedience, love, and honour of spirit, to your heavenly King. Your backwardness to think of him, your listlessness when you are near

him, the unruliness of your wayward heart, utterly averse to do or to bear his will; your entire affection to the world, your delight in carnal pleasures, your self-esteem; all these inventions which you have sought out, may give you little pain in this your day upon earth. But when you shall, by and by, be forced against your will into eternity, then you shall feel to your cost, what a sore evil it is to be without the obedient spirit of a creature, to be barren of all love towards God, and to be desolate of all heavenly graces, and so without all possibility of happiness for ever. This world passeth "as a dream when one awaketh," and the next altogether unfit for you; what a disconsolate soul must you be upon the moment of your separation! And, upon both these consequences, follows, in the

Third place, as the event of man's apostacy, that a sentence of wrath is gone forth against the world. God is able to maintain his own cause; he is able fully to vindicate the wrong which the lawless world hath done to his honour. He doth not affect a dominion which he wants power to manage. He "sitteth over all from the beginning," and he "remaineth a king for ever." "Hell and destruction are before him," nor can any "stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?" And can we conceive that God, jealous of his rights, who "will not give his glory to another," shall tamely submit to so provoking an insult as the universal rebellion of his creatures? Shall he not avenge himself upon us, and make it known from one side of the heaven to the other, by the exem-

plary justice he will do himself upon us, that "he is God, and there is none else?" We have drawn a curtain over his glory, nor doth he yet make it his glory to appear; he suffers it to be hid a little space; but he will magnificently glorify himself in the day of his vengeance, and "all the earth shall know that God is the Lord." You may make light of sin, now that ye see not the hand of justice yet stretched out; ye may take little account of the dishonour ye do unto God in the strange forgetfulness of your ways; but hear what the God of truth saith, he who changeth not, and whose words shall not fail: "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." "The soul that sinneth, shall die." And, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Not to multiply passages; throughout the gospel revelation, the offers made us of mercy do ever suppose us to be in a lost and undone state, by reason of sin. The established appointment and decree of God in heaven and earth is, "The wages of sin is death." By the punishment of sin, God will maintain his glory, which the insolence of sin seems to have deprived him of, till the recompense of vengeance "make his mighty power to be known." Lay it to heart, then, whoever you are: you have sinned, provokingly rebelled against your Maker; and how "fearful a thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God!" Let me suggest to you the certainty of that wrath, the eternity of that vengeance, the depth and horror of that Tophet,

the fury of that fire, which the breath of the Lord kindles. If sin, like a devouring army, hath already brought desolation after it; if it hath entailed the curse of God upon nature, and upon ourselves; judge, then, what store of vengeance is prepared for it against that day, when it shall be fully rewarded. But whatever that vengeance be, sin hath made you all the children and heirs of it. This is the last consequence of man's apostacy; it hath brought the curse of God upon us. The great Governor of the world "will not let sin go unpunished."

And now, "what shall we say to these things?" You cannot deny the accusation. "The whole world is guilty before God." You cannot dispute the consequences. You must own, that you have dishonoured God's government, and set yourself at a deplorable distance from God and happiness, and incurred his avowed wrath. Sad state of a sinful world! Methinks, in such a view of ourselves, every heart should be struck with an awful suspense, with a sacred dread about the issue. That trembling anxiety, which seizes every breast, upon occasion of some more solemn execution, when the hand is now lifted up to strike the blow, should possess our souls. And yet I have another consideration to add, when we meet again, which must abundantly contribute to increase our apprehension. But I shall dismiss you for the present, with this awakening passage of Scripture, which you will find in the sixth chapter of Genesis, which introduces God's denunciation of vengeance upon the first

world:—"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; for it repenteth me that I have made them." The application is both easy to be made, and terrible to be thought of.

SERMON II.

THE HELPLESSNESS OF MAN.

ISAIAH lxiii. 5.

And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold.

No sooner had Adam sinned, than he felt the terrible consequences which sin ever brings with it.—Reflect a moment upon the circumstances he was in, when now having transgressed the divine commandment, he "heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden." Conscience in alarm proclaimed his guilt, and prevented the accusation, "Thou hast eaten of the forbidden fruit." The curse sounded in his ears, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." God was at hand to inflict the vengeance. What should the wretch do? He dared not stand the once beloved countenance of God. Nor did he reflect, how vain it was to think of flying from his universal presence. Foolishly he hid himself amongst the trees, till the voice of God commanded him forth. Sin instantly begets an abhorred issue in the soul, the confusion of guilt, dislike of God, and a dread of vengeance—"Adam was afraid, and hid himself."

Our God "is a consuming fire," to sinners: sin cannot endure his majesty. Sin, dishonourable to God, and apprehensive of his avenging arm, doth not like his presence. Say thou, who hast weighed the consequences of sin with any consideration, is it a light thing that thou hast dishonoured God, and provoked his wrath upon thy head? Canst thou well bear to think of him, who, strict in justice, and almighty in power, is thy enemy and avenger? Art thou not ready to act over again the sad folly of Adam; to hide thyself from God's presence; to drown the too terrible reflection in care or pleasure, till God call thee forth and will be attended to? It is well if thou hearken to that voice, though the sound of it be terrible to thy soul. Well wilt it be with thee, if in this thy day thou lay to heart the consequences of thine iniquities, while yet there is hope; if, though with trembling and astonishment, thou art made to feel the state of a sinner, that most deplorable state of being a rebel, alienated from all esteem of God and fitness for his glory, and an heir of vengeance and rejection. Then, with an interesting concern, thou wilt enter with me into this farther inquiry, Whether thou canst remove these consequences from thee; whether thou canst restore the honour thou hast taken away from the Governor of the world, bring back thy soul to a creature-like disposition, without which thou must remain incapable of tasting spiritual happiness, or averting God's vengeance?

I must be allowed to tell you, you cannot.

This was the *second* point.

And, upon this particular, I shall wish to drive you to the distress of Jonah's mariners; having raised a tempest about you, to leave you without any other hopes of safety than by "casting forth into the sea" your self-confidence. You may be apt to look for security and salvation, and healing the breach that sin hath made between God and you, by labour and repentance, purely your own. As the mariners did, you may be rowing hard to this land to save yourselves, unwilling to throw yourselves upon mercy as otherwise lost. But when you shall not be able; when you shall find that you cannot trust in any thing you can do, either to glorify God, to recover purity of heart, or to satisfy his justice; then with unwonted attention you shall consider that mighty Redeemer, who is come to restore the breach, and tenderly waits to hide, and cherish you under the covering of his healing wings.

I say, therefore, that having been found guilty of sin before the majesty of God, thereby you have dishonoured him; in such a manner alienated yourself from God, that you are unfit for his presence and glory, and have entailed an eternal curse upon you. But from these consequences you cannot rescue yourself.

I would engage you to observe the connexion there is between these consequences of sin. It is notorious, that the rebellion of man's will and way dishonours God as the Governor of the world. This rebellion hath destroyed all capacity of happiness in the creature with the Creator, though in him only it

is possible that a reasonable being can be blessed; while the glory of God, and the evil dispositions of man's rebellious nature, lead directly to a state of endless banishment from God's presence, and of avowed and most required punishment. Till God be glorified, till man be humbled, the separation between the Creator and creature remains; and the issue, on the one part and the other, must be man's ruin for ever. God remaining dishonoured, and man rebellious, the issue is enmity and death. If, therefore, you would compose the difference sin hath made between God and you, you must render back all the glory of which you have deprived God,—you must put on the disposition of a creature,—you must satisfy the demands of infinite justice. See now how incapable you are to effect either of these.

First, If you would remove the consequences of sin from you, you must render back the glory to God of which you have deprived him. I will suppose you sensible, that, by your sins and rebellion, you have dishonoured God your Maker and Governor, and that you are willing to do all in your power to render back that glory to him. I will suppose you too, with the utmost purity of heart and integrity of life, returned to your allegiance; and that, with such a simplicity in yourself, your constant earnest endeavour is to promote God's glory in the world, by all the influence you have upon others. But now, even in this case, you will not advance a step towards repairing the dishonour which your past sins have brought upon God. For what by such a conduct are you doing, more than your duty? or

was it not your duty to have been with God always, as I suppose you now to be? It is true, by such an humble demeanour you do not increase the debt of dishonour you are charged with; but then neither do you lessen it. Doing now as you ought, you leave the state of your former sins just as they were; nor can you hereby remove one jot of that disgrace which they have brought upon God's government. Should subjects who had violently dethroned their king, afterwards, upon better conscience, set him up again; will any man say that such a monarch hath suffered no disgrace? or that his restoration made him ample amends? No, he should not be impeached of injustice, however he might be of want of clemency, should he exercise his restored power in the punishment of such rebels. Present obedience, then, however perfect, would in nowise heal the breaches which old rebellions have made upon God's glory. But farther,

Having been undutiful *yourself*, have you not also been the occasion of dishonouring God in the persons of *others?* Your evil example, vain conversation, light and negligent carriage, have they not hurt the glory of God, by the discountenance they have put upon religion, and the encouragement they have given to vice? Now, who or where are they, to whom you have been a snare in the days of your wanton forgetfulness of your Maker? Alas! you know them not. They are even all that ever were acquainted with or saw you; at home, abroad, in all companies, you were ignorantly patronizing the cause of rebellion. At best, you can but recollect a few

upon whom you have done the majesty of God signal disgrace. Go then, bring these back: Desperate project! Some of them are nowhere to be found; some in distant parts of the earth; and others departed, dead, it may be in their sins, having left behind them a race of evil doers, and iniquity for "an inheritance to children's children." Thou canst not but tremble at the thought. But at least recover those to God who are still alive and with thee. Entreat with them, by the glory of their God and thine, by the eternal worth of their souls and thy own: try upon them all the force of argument and tears. Alas! some would mock, some would despise, and some would dissemble with thee. It would be no small conquest, shouldst thou gain so much as one.

Or consider yet again. Thou wast a living infection; thine acquaintance caught sin of thee, and they conveyed it to others. Say, how far will the plague even yet reach? When will it stop? Or what measures wilt thou take to prevent the contagion from going still farther? The reflection is enough to make every heart fail, while he thus evidently sees the irreparable dishonour he hath brought upon God.

Speak now, what hope hast thou of doing God justice? Wilt thou venture thy soul upon it, that thou hast made no breach upon the glory of God, which thou hast not, or canst not sufficiently restore? Wilt thou be bold to rest the cause of thy eternal acceptance with God upon this plea? I will answer for thee, that thou darest not meet the righteous

God in judgment upon so lame a confidence. Already thou art crying for mercy: "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." But how would thy cry be increased, couldst thou see the dishonour which sin does to the Majesty of heaven, as thou wilt assuredly see it, when thou shalt stand with the assembled world before the Judge of quick and dead! When thou shalt behold God magnificently glorifying himself upon sinful men and devils, for the dishonour they have done him! Couldst thou know the hurt which thy sins have brought upon the glory of God, as thou shalt then know it, how would thy wounded soul cry out for mercy!

Putting the matter now upon the most favourable footing; supposing you absolutely and most entirely returned to your allegiance, you see how it must fare with you for the dishonour you have done God, how incapable you would be of rendering back the glory of which you had deprived him.

But can I make such a supposition concerning you? Can I address you as a person returned to God, as one framed again to the temper of a creature? I know not any power you have in yourself to become thus: I know your utter detestation of, and aversion to it. This leads to

The *second* thing which you have to get over, in order to your settling the difference which sin hath made between God and you: You must put on the disposition of a creature; and this you cannot. Now, having gained this point with you already, that sin hath destroyed the image of God in your soul, by

what was advanced in the former discourse, I shall speak to you as a person convinced that he is set up for himself and is at enmity with God; as to one who hath found that he "likes not to retain God in his knowledge," being turned away from him to earthly and carnal things, in all the affections and choice of his soul; and, who, consequently, is assured of his entire incapacity to enjoy spiritual and eternal happiness, till this sinful "law in his members" be rooted out, and he be brought back to a perfect purity of heart, and the true spirit of a creature.

I suppose you know all this. But you must be told, that you had never been acquainted with it, had not God declared it to you. Now that you have been informed of the nature of God and happiness, and have been made to see the waste which sin hath made upon your soul, you can discover the consistency of this reasoning, and the need you have of being renewed in the spirit of your mind. But had you been left to yourself, you had perhaps never thought of it, would not once have suspected the evil state you find yourself to be in; possibly, would have known nothing of God at all, no not so much as that there is any such being; or, at best, have sat down with very confused notions of his perfections. And I leave yourself to determine, how, in such circumstances, you must have remained altogether excluded from all possibility of recovering the spirit of a creature. You are indebted therefore to a foreign help, even for this knowledge of God, yourself, and the nature of a reasonable happiness.

However, supposing you well informed of your

condition, and of the need you lie under to frame your heart again to the temper of a creature and a dependant; how will you effect this change upon yourself?

The word of God is plainly against you in this matter: "You cannot turn and prepare yourself by your own natural strength," Article x. Hear what it says:—"The flesh is weak. The flesh lusteth against the spirit. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. And they that are in the flesh cannot please God." So far from any such power of turning to God, that "we are not sufficient, of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves;" and that, because the "imaginations of man's thoughts are only evil continually." And will you imagine that you are able to subdue the power which sin hath over your soul, and to acquire a purity of heart which will make you every way fit to see God, when he tells you so expressly, that you are insufficient for the very least part of it, so much as to desire or even to think of it?

Or if God's declarations do not convince you, at least let your own observations persuade you. Have you ever known or heard of so much as one in all past ages, that returned to his duty with a complete victory over his evil dispositions which war within him? Hath there been one such righteous person; in the whole world, so much as one? Where is that man that liveth and sinneth not? Just the contrary; sin hath been ever the complaint of the good, and the practice of the bad. And have there been

none, think you, at all times; do you not verily judge there are many, in the reach of your knowledge, who would be rid of sin, and put on the disposition of creatures, if they could? But none have been able.

Or, finally, if you will obstinately contend that you are able; that you can at your pleasure extirpate the pride, worldliness and lust, that now dwell in you, leaving not any traces of them in your heart; that you can raise your soul to a perfect spiritual purity, and stand in God's sight, clean and holy as the angels of his presence: if you will needs cherish this fond opinion of your sufficiency; try your strength, you have no other concern which equals the importance of this to you, to have a new heart and a right spirit. Go, root out of your soul the lusting you find there after indulgence and ease, that you may be no more assaulted with vicious thoughts; rid yourself of all worldly influences that at present sway you; even of all the undue regard your heart pays to interest and honour, to men's opinion and favour. Bring down the pride and desire of self-pleasing, which have possessed themselves of you, giving direction to all your conduct; and, together with them, banish for ever the troop of their attendants, unbelief, wilfulness, impatience, murmuring, aversion towards God; boasting, malice, envy, hatred, haughtiness, stubbornness, anger, resentment, peevishness towards men. Let neither pride, nor any of these its ugly issue and odious train, ever more appear in your mind: and then put on the love of God in your whole heart, and of man even as of yourself. To mention no more, try your strength upon

these: experience will soon tell you, if the very sight of your difficult undertaking hath not prevailed, that you are not sufficient for these things. By and by, you will join the universal cry of man impotent to good: "Miserable creature that I am, who shall deliver me?"

Thus you may be assured that you are unable to frame your heart again to the temper of a creature. And yet, if this be not done, you must remain unfit for God, and incapable of happiness. Miserable creature, indeed! Sorely beset with evils! A dishonourer of God, and incapable of rendering back his injured glory! An alien from him, in whose presence is life, through the defilement of thy soul; and yet unable to recover that purity which can alone make thee meet for his presence, were he disposed to remit to thee all the demands which his forfeited honour hath upon thee!—Miserable man! what will the end of these things be? Almost I know not how to aggravate thy misery any more. What will the end of these things be? Thou dishonourer of God, thou slave of sin, how wilt thou escape the wrath to come? How avert that punishment which the glory of the heavenly Majesty is concerned to inflict; a state which the perverse wickedness of thy heart makes thee only fit for? Both the one and the other, the dishonour done by thee to God, and the unfitness of thy soul for his presence, alarm thee with apprehensions of an everlasting condition of misery, under the divine displeasure. And now, therefore, I add,

Thirdly, If you will heal the breach made by your sins between God and you, you must satisfy the demands of his infinite justice; but this you cannot any other way, than by enduring his vengeance. You know how express and absolute God's justice is; it claims the last mite, either in obedience or punishment:—"Cursed is he that confirmeth not all the words of this law, to do them." The irreversible decree of God through the universe is, "The wages of sin is death." In consequence of this immoveable purpose of the Almighty, angels have been "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Sinners, and authors of sin as they are, they are unable now for ever to render back to God the glory they have despoiled him of; ever unable to regain the angelic purity of nature they have forfeited, they remain for ever the objects of vengeance, and are set forth for an example of justice. And tell me, my brother, thou and I have stricken hands with sin; wherewithal shall we satisfy justice, and avert a like suffering of vengeance? We have sinned, we have done wickedly; and we cannot undo what we have done. Our sins that we have committed stand fast for ever, and for ever are the objects of that infinite justice and wrath, which doth not let sin go unpunished. We cannot avoid justice, because we cannot recall our days, and undo the sin that we have done. What thinkest thou—didst thou not forget God, and set up to please thyself? This thou ownest. But may not what is now said of thee, be equally

alleged against thee ten thousand ages hence, that thou didst sin against God, by this very forgetfulness and apostacy from him? That God created the heavens and the earth, is as true now, and will be so eternally, as it was on that glorious moment when "God spake the word, and they were made," when "he commanded, and they were created." Just so of thy sins; now, and eternally, they lie against thee, and evermore call for justice and vengeance. One of these two things remains, either to undo what thou hast done, or to fall under the hand of justice. And since thou canst not attempt the one, be assured the other waits for thee.

Nay, but for any thing thou canst do to the contrary, thou wilt always continue sinful; and therefore, not for thy past only, but for thy present iniquity, thou must be for ever the immediate object of justice and wrath. The sinfulness of Satan this moment, as much challenges the justice and indignation of God, as did his first war in heaven, when his place was not found any more there; and as long as he remains the evil spirit he is, which he will do for ever, the like continuation of justice and displeasure shall light upon him, as a present, as well as an old apostate.

See now the issue of the whole. God is ready to do himself justice upon you, and to vindicate his glory, in your eternal punishment. While you also, now and eternally unable to quit your sinfulness, are eternally unfit for his presence, and will eternally remain the object of his immediate justice and vengeance.

Say, then, vain man, where are thy hopes sunk? What is become of that confident boasting? which way canst thou save thyself? For ought thou canst do, thou hast no other expectation but "judgment, and fiery indignation." Would God thou wert well aware of this thy deplorable, helpless state! Then I should bring to thee glad tidings indeed, in the offers of mercy obtained for, and proposed to thee, in Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour.

And truly, as we are never so near glory and immortality, as when we are struggling with death, and sorely beset in the dark and melancholy passage of a departing hour; so it is an awful and importunate concern about the consequences of sin, which leads a man to the gate of mercy. And you may be sure you are never so near salvation, as when, through the grace of God, finding yourself lost and undone, you are well disposed to throw yourself upon mercy.

I must entreat, therefore, if you will be profited by the message of peace I have next to offer, that you will be at pains with yourself upon all the former particulars. Inquire into the reality of your sinfulness; and weigh attentively the consequences of sin, and cast in your mind how unable you are to rescue yourself out of them. All this, let conscience and reason speak; for I trust you have heard nothing which is not as consistent with reason as it is with Scripture.

And now I will draw this one conclusion, which I wish you to be deeply convinced of, from all that

hath been advanced; namely, that "sin is your greatest enemy." The consideration of which, possibly, may help you to greater seriousness in the inquiry I am recommending. For whilst I remark these three points, as evidently arising out of the subject, that sin (by which I would principally be understood to mean, man's erecting his will for his guide, instead of God's sovereign pleasure; this being truly the root of all other sin, and that which carries the highest measure of guilt in it,) dishonours God, as the excellent Governor of the world —defiles the soul of man—and brings misery with and after it;—I shall hope that you will be led more solemnly to consider the consequences of sin, and the concern you have in them; and also that you are grown displeased and tired with it, and heartily willing to be rid of such a monster and enemy.

Sin is your greatest enemy.

1. Sin dishonours God, as the Governor of the world. We speak not of the glory which God hath in himself; of that essential honour which he possesses, as a most mighty, all-perfect, eternal, and independent Being; but we speak of the manifestation of this most respectable glory of the Godhead, through the submission of his creatures. When God is obeyed, and his will meets with no opposition or backwardness in the soul, but the creature flies with joy, to execute the Almighty command, knowing no other desire, nor wishing any other happiness, than this service of the Most High; when a race of beings, whom God hath

made, do thus wait upon his sovereign will with one universal, uninterrupted readiness of obedience, —then God is known among them to be what he is; then the Creator is glorified, and the creature is blessed. But when sin comes in, this beautiful and lovely order is disturbed. The things formed forget their station, will not, do not any more obey; they slight their Maker, and pass on with an insolent disregard of the divine will, to act as they please, and God in the mean time loses his dominion. The glory which should accrue to him, from the obedience of his works, is gone; and, instead of one universal monarch, there are as many as there are of creatures, so many self-worshipping idols are set up in his place. Then confusion follows, and every evil work. Every one making his own will his God, will bear no control. And while from hence, envyings and resentments, and hatred and violence, grow and spread, the honour of God is deeply wounded, and his government suffers damage, even to desolation. In such circumstances, the glory of God is like the sun in the night: it shines, indeed, with its proper and essential brightness; but then it is not seen; the face of the world is turned away from it. Though God ruleth the earth, his dominion is covered and unseen, through the darkness which sin hath brought upon it. And, I beseech you, how horrid a thing, that the creature, the subject, the dependant, should thus rob God of his glory! that the Maker should be rejected and disowned, by those very "works which his hands have made," and which he fails

not to preserve and bless! Great God! thou seest it; daily thou beholdest this ungodliness, and considerest the wrong we are doing thy awful Majesty! thou seest thyself slighted, thy dread command unnoticed and disobeyed, thy glorious name forgotten! Almighty King! we are ashamed, yea, even distressed, for the disgrace which is brought upon thy glory. The remembrance of our rebellions pain us. O! when shall we be rid of this sin, the "enemy that hath done thee this dishonour!"

2. Sin defiles the soul of man. Was it not a desirable state, that of innocence and purity? Was not the soul of man a lovely being, when it was stored with those tempers which can alone endear it to its Creator? While humility, without the least motion to pride; trust, void of all fear; obedience, without the most secret murmuring; love, entire and unalloyed; while holiness, righteousness, truth, and goodness; while quietness and peace, all of them dwelt there together; while the soul of man was thus divinely arrayed, was it not lovely? Were we not glorious within? But sin hath effaced it all, scarcely left any ruins of so glorious a fabric. Sin hath made us proud and unbelieving, disobedient and unloving; hath stamped us with the likeness of the prince of darkness; hath drawn upon our souls too near a resemblance of his envy and hatred, his bitterness, and malice, and revenge; hath turned us after earthly loves, and brutal joy, with the whole bent of our inclinations. Sin hath done us this irreparable hurt; hath ruined what we were, and made

us what we are—earthly, sensual, devilish, averse from God, unfit for him and happiness: all that is within us, since sin entered, proclaims the melancholy truth. Our souls were as the "garden of Eden" before it; and lo, it hath left us "a desolate wilderness." And what! shall we stand upon any terms of friendship with such an enemy? Though it look pleasing, and flatter, and smile upon us, and would betray us with kisses, shall we not hate the traitor, and hold it off with abhorrence, as the very bane of our souls?

3. Sin brings misery with, and after it. You have heard how God threatens; you may feel, if you will, how he now punishes it. Consider, I pray you, if sin hath not cursed the ground under us, and turned the heavens, one while into brass, and another into a deluge over our heads; if it hath not armed the sky with thunder, and the bowels of the earth with convulsions; if it hath not destroyed all joy, and chased happiness out of the world; if it hath not brought on us vexation and sickness, and crosses and care, making us very slaves to keep ourselves alive, and then consigning this lordly body of ours to the worms and dust. I speak not of unknown things: I speak what we feel and struggle with, till we can hold life no longer, and depart to the "place appointed for all living." But after death comes the misery indeed, known now only in apprehension, but so felt even in the expectation, as to make all present woe of no account, when compared with it. Launch your thoughts into eternal misery, and you shall think of man's momentary wretchedness, with that littleness of apprehension

wherewith a person sailing upon the vast ocean reflects upon the river, which appeared great while he was passing out of it. And what is there that can be called misery, which you do not see before you, as the eternal issue and wages of sin? To think of the body's dwelling in flames! Should you be invited, by strange curiosity, to see a criminal burnt at the stake, your soul would be moved within you, though a few minutes would put an end to his tortures. But should you see him burning, and not yet dead, after a whole day; and should that day be lengthened to a week, a month, a year, to a thousand ages, to forever! Intolerable even to think of it; how then to behold it? but how most intolerable to suffer it! And this but the half, perhaps but the lesser half of man's eternal misery! For to think of the sufferings of the soul, consummate in all wickedness to the fullest measure, desperately hating God, and yet lying instantly under the frowns of his irreconcilably enraged majesty; how shall conscience sting it, rage gnaw it, and revenge consume it! How shall hopeless grief, impotent malice, and utter despair, burst forth into strange complainings, distressing groans, woful curses, and blasphemous insults, the language of hell; making the voice of the damned terrible, and filling their dark chambers with horror! And all this with tormenting devils, the outcasts of heaven, wreaking their insatiable malice upon them! O what a society, place, punishment, is here! And yet all this "the wages of sin." See then, what an enemy this sin is to us, here and forever!

To conclude, I shall hope that such reflections upon the dishonour sin doth to God, upon the defilement it brings upon the soul, and the misery which comes with and after it, may, by the divine grace, engage your heart to some dislike of it: so that while you are searching after this most important concern, the reality, the consequences of your sins, and your insufficiency to succour yourself, you may be disengaged from that bias, which the convenience of sin and self-flattery are too apt to give to the soul; and, in the issue, may find yourself as earnest to be rid of sin, as from the deplorable events it hath produced. Thus disposed, you will be ready to hear the good news of salvation, in the ability and willingness the Redeemer hath to help you; and will discover a becoming forwardness in laying hold of his most gracious offers. May God both prevent and assist you herein, for the sake of the same Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour!

SERMON III.

THE POWER AND LOVE OF CHRIST.

ISAIAH lxiii. 5.

Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me.

WHEN a numerous host of angels declared the appearance of our Redeemer, their song was "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." But what songs are those which we send forth upon the remembrance of that glorious manifestation? What suitable rejoicing do we show at this season.* Is the voice heard among us of those who rejoice for hell shut and heaven opened, for peace and glory promulged to a lost world? The days now before us were separated by the piety of our ancestors for holy joy; were separated that, with humble thankful hearts, we might give ourselves up to mutual congratulation, to speak one to another of the great things which the Redeemer hath done. But to think, how the approaching holy-days will be spent in this land; how the body of this people,

* The substance of this Sermon was preached the Sunday before Christmas-day.

as it were set loose and casting off all restraint, are going with a determined resoluteness into all manner of debauchery and riot, as if a license to sin upon this occasion had been issued from heaven; how doth it pierce every faithful heart with sorrow, and cover the loyal countenance with sadness! My brethren, what little spot will be undefiled? What corner of the land where God will not be peculiarly dishonoured, Christ trampled upon with a more than double portion of insolence, and vice wallow in mad lawlessness? Horrid expectation! But shall not *we* escape? Shall I not hope, that this seasonable word will check the sallies of intemperate mirth among *you;* and direct your joy into a better channel than that of drunken carousals and abused feasts? Your hearts must be hard and savage, if what you have heard already, and what is now to be advanced, do not gain so much as this with you, to be sober and considerate a few days. But to come nearer to the subject: If I have thus far prevailed; if conscience pronounces you guilty; and, from a deliberate attention to the consequences of sin, vengeance dismays you as a dishonourer of God's universal government, and as defiled and unfit for his presence, having found that no other way remains on your part to glorify God, than by the eternal suffering of his just indignation; and also that your rebellious spirit hath taken to it such dark and malignant dispositions, as, when filled to the full measure, (which they would necessarily grow up to, for any inclination or power you have to restrain them,) would leave you only a meet companion for the accursed outcasts of

heaven: if, with a fair inquiry, being just to your eternal interests, you have weighed what hath been before said, and are wondering at the immensity of ruin which sin hath introduced, surprised too with the conviction of your own helplessness; my doctrine shall drop upon you as the rain on a parched ground, "my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass, when I publish the name of the Lord" the rock of salvation, whose work is perfect. Upon a supposed conviction, now wrought in you, of your sinfulness, of the consequences of sin, and of your utter inability to remove them, I proceed to the

Third general proposition:

Christ is *able* to succour you, having taken away all those fearful circumstances, which were seen to be the result of sin: and, withal, he is *willing* to do so.

First, He is *able* to succour you: for he hath fully vindicated and restored God's injured glory.

Secondly, He hath obtained power to renew the hearts of men to their original purity.

Thirdly, He hath satisfied the demands of divine justice; and all this by his obedience, even unto death.

First, but you are ready to say, Who is he that is sufficient for these things? Who is the person so dignified, as by his single might to set out the glory of God upon earth in its native grandeur and splendour; by his own meritorious doings, to bring all that honour to the divine government, which it

would have received from the universal obedience, loyalty, and submission of the whole race of mankind? What is his rank, that he should have power to prevail with God to return, and creating anew the souls of men, again to communicate himself to them? Who is that wondrous one, that could undergo the vengeance and the punishment which the sins of men deserved, and amply satisfy the strict demands of justice? Who is he, thus mighty to save? Suffer me, ye highest angels and archangels, ye cherubim and seraphim; ye can only be his attendants. Your kindest endeavours had left us without hope. You presume only to stand at a distance, and adore the counsels of divine wisdom; while admiration overspreads you, and your spirits cry with solemn sentiment, "How deep thy knowledge and wisdom, O God! How unsearchable thy judgments! How past finding out thy ways!"

"The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil;" that is, to restore that original state which sin had overturned, to effect a reconciliation between the Creator and the creature, wherein the majesty and justice of God should remain unhurt, and man, brought to obedience and submission, should live. "God was manifest in the flesh," upon this important reconciliation. The word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, by whom "all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made, was made flesh, and dwelt among us." In that flesh which he had assumed, now God and man mysteriously united, he was amply qualified to restore that

glory to God upon earth, of which sin had spoiled him; to quicken the souls of men sunk under the dominion of sin, and to bear the utmost inflictions of justice. And to these ends, in that flesh, he suffered death upon the cross.

Consider him not now, as a man merely of your own nature, but as a man of the same nature with you, united to the Deity. The man thus dignified, free from all spot of sin, gave himself a willing victim to the divine glory, was made a spectacle to angels and men, was lifted up to shame, and resigned his breath upon a tree; and this, with every circumstance of reproach which could possibly make sin appear infamous, and put it to shame. And what infamy or shame could sin be brought to in the face of the world, equal with the sacrificing of the only innocent man that was ever born, and this man also avowed to be the Son of God, wherever his name should be heard, and that by a death most vile and slave-like? Surely herein sin suffered disgrace indeed; and "the glory of God's government was fully vindicated." As in human constitutions, when shaken by the insolence of rebellion, the execution of some capital rebel recovers the majesty and firmness of government, and makes rebellion shrink in the utmost corners of the land; so much more, in the offering up of Christ upon the cross, the honour of God's government is re-established, and, by reason of the innocence and dignity of the sacrifice, all the disgrace which man's sin and rebellion had brought upon it is wiped away. Possibly the evidence of this may not be so striking, but to enlightened and

humbled minds, at present; however, when the day of recompense shall be revealed, and every eye shall see the once despised Jesus, decked with majesty, and adorned with resplendent glory, sitting upon his throne to determine the everlasting condition of men, it will be impossible to question, that by the death of such a one, glory hath been given to "God in the highest."

Secondly, He hath obtained power to renew the hearts of men to their original purity. God and man, since sin entered into the world, were at variance; and, like persons after differences, each of them keeps at distance from the other. God withholds himself from man, and will have no converse with him, till satisfaction be made for the dishonour sin hath done his majesty: man is helpless and also stubborn, neither able nor willing to renew communion with his Maker, although herein alone he can be happy. So that all communion is cut off between God and his creature. But now this great Reconciler, having vindicated and restored God's honour, hath prevailed with God to revisit, and dwell with the souls of men: and having purchased the Holy Ghost, by the kindly influences thereof can soften and prepare the hearts of men to receive him. For such was the merit of Christ's sacrifice, that while it restored glory to God, it again opened the communication between God and the spirits of men; that is, it obtained the gift of the Holy Ghost for the sanctifying men's hearts and lives, and so recovering them to a fitness for God. It pleased the Father, that in this Man should all fulness dwell; yea,

"all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He was, and is, "full of the Holy Ghost." "And having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost," he is able to shed it abroad in men's hearts, even that "living waters shall flow out of their bellies." He is made the channel, through whom the supply of the Spirit comes to us; and that grace so derived unto us, is able to cleanse and purify our hearts; even as the same Holy Spirit, of whom he was conceived, kept him in all respects a man like ourselves, free from all spot of sin. We are of ourselves insufficient to all good; but the Spirit, which dwelleth in him, and which by purchase he hath a right to bestow, can quicken our dead souls, furnish us with strength against all our enemies, mortify our rebellious pride, earthly desires, and carnal lustings, and restore us again to the perfect image of God. He sitteth over men as a refiner and purifier of silver, to breathe upon their hearts with his Spirit, and to kindle a fire within them, purging them as gold and silver, that their souls may be offered unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. And the grace which he gives must needs be sufficient to all the purposes of our soul's recovery; since "God worketh in us both to will and to do," even that "Holy Ghost which is shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Whereas then we are naturally without any spiritual strength, bowed down under sin, and unable to lift up ourselves, this Jesus is able to quicken and put life into us, furnishing us with the supply of the sanctifying Spirit, out of the fulness thereof,

which abideth in him. He is between God and us, to convey to us the Spirit, at his sole disposal: that as from Adam a sinful and corrupted nature is derived unto us; so Christ should be the second head, for communicating a contrary and divine principle of grace and holiness. Here a way is opened both for communion between God and man, and for purging our hearts, that they may be fit habitations for God's presence. And the one and the other of these is owing to the merit of his atonement; which at once vindicating God's honour, removed the bar to reconciliation on God's part; and purchasing the gift of the Spirit for man, might make him both able and willing to come in and accept of the reconciliation, by putting on a creature-like and obedient spirit. And,

Thirdly, By the same sacrifice, he hath satisfied all the demands of divine justice. The justice of God will be allowed to proceed upon principles of unerring propriety and rectitude; whereby, as he will not suffer sin against his majesty and government to be unpunished, but will correct it in a way suitable to his own dignity, to the nature of the crime, and to the ends of his dominion; so, when this hath been done, he will be satisfied, will become gracious, and remit his indignation. Now, when we consider the person who gave himself a sacrifice to the divine vengeance, we shall find, that in his death sin hath been so fully punished, that all the ends of punishment are answered. Wherefore, even God's justice will hinder his demanding any more; whilst also it either could not, or would not be satis-

fied with less. The prophet Zechariah, speaking of this sacrifice, had said: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The application, which our Lord makes of the latter clause in this passage, convinces us that the former is spoken of himself and his sacrifice. Against whom then did the sword of the Lord of Hosts awake in vengeance? Against a man, "forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, himself likewise took part of the same, yet without sin." A man, that is God's fellow, in the beginning with God, and God one with the Father. Against this God-man, the shepherd, God drew out the sword; he "laid down his life for the sheep;" he "was made a sin-offering for us." And in the sacrifice of such a one, what vengeance did sin deserve, which it did not suffer? What did justice demand, which was not paid? What correction of iniquity was needful to make God's government respectable, and to deter from violating it, and not amply executed? "Search the Scriptures;" there you see abundantly, that the sacrifice of this "Lamb taketh away the sin of the world;" that God accepteth it as a propitiation, an offering to him "of a sweet-smelling savour;" in consequence hereof, that "Christ hath the keys of death and hell;" and that "all power in heaven and earth is given to him." True then it is that "sin shall not be unpunished;" that the wages of it is death; that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against it."

All this is the certain, the unchangeable decree of the Almighty; nor shall one tittle of it fail. But behold the garden and the cross; consider well the agony, and the execution; remember whose cries you hear, and who it is that expires; and then say, if sin hath not been punished, if death hath not been endured, if the cup of wrath hath not been drank even to the very dregs, if all is not finished. For he was not only a man, whose sufferings were full of bitterness, and pain, and reproach; though this were pitiable: not barely one he was, who was innocent of the crimes for which he suffered; though this might justly double our compassion: but he was a man, pure in heart and life, as Adam in the moment of creation; he was also one personally united to the Eternal Word. Thus innocent, thus dignified, "he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; his soul was made an offering for sin." It was his union with the divine Word, which enabled him to endure all the load of wrath which sin had provoked: it was this, which made that endurance a sufficient satisfaction. Thus united, God could neither demand, nor we deserve more of vengeance, than he could pay. Thus united, he was capable of suffering; and this suffering was to the full satisfaction of divine justice: "Wherefore also he is able to save sinners to the uttermost."

Say now, upon these views, what power hath not Christ to save? He hath salvation to bestow: for in his death all the consequences of sin are done

away. This vindicates God's glory, opens a way to communion with God, and sanctification of our hearts through the Spirit, and averts the fearful curse of God's wrath. He is able to succour us. And he is willing to impart to us all the benefits of this valuable purchase.

But stop, thou sinful man, and consider the value of thy soul. He who "beholdeth the things which are not, as if they were;" who comprehendeth eternity, and takes it up at a thought; who hath fixed the depth of hell and the height of heaven, and measures in his mind the misery of the one and the happiness of the other; who, knowing the exact worth of this world and the next, hath sent his only begotten Son to rescue thee from destruction, and to refit thy ruinous soul for glory: what dost thou read of the value of thy soul in this his dealing? Were a prophet or an angel sent to thee on an express message from God with a miracle in his hand; did a well-known friend come to thee from the dead; it would bear no equal conviction with it, could awaken no such solemn impression, as the condescension of the Eternal Word to take upon him thy nature, and therein to make atonement, is suited to do. "Hast thou understood these things?" Hast thou learnt the importance of thy soul, whilst thou hast been considering "the holy One of God" manifested to render glory to God, to raise thy defiled nature to holiness, and to redeem thee from the curse? Hast thou been searching after the various steps of this adorable mystery with a trembling concern? and hast thon felt a glad and satisfying joy

and consolation springing up within thee, and growing more quick and lively, as the mystery hath been unfolding, and conviction of the Redeemer's power to save and succour thee, hath grown stronger and clearer upon thy heart? It is well: such as these are the anxious distresses of the self-condemned soul; such the awful importunity with which it waits upon the rising of "the Sun of righteousness." As this light advances, the soul enlarges its prospect, pierces upward to God, and forward to eternity, and downward to hell; extends its view abroad upon the miserable state of man, intimately considers itself, and is mightily engaged in the cause of its eternal interests. For the sacrifice of Christ is so instructive every way; it so warns us of the horrid guilt and danger of sin, of the excellence of eternal glory, and of the terrors of God's wrath, and withal of our own weakness and insufficiency; that whoever attends to it with personal application, shall assuredly find the value of his soul, and insensibly fall into that awakened frame of concern which the apostle so strongly expresses, when he bids us "work out our salvation with fear and trembling."

Say now, have you thus weighed the sacrifice of Christ? Hath it taught you either to tremble under the vast importance of your salvation, or to rejoice in the assured ability of the Redeemer to save you? Hear then yet farther.

Secondly, He is *willing* to make you partaker of all these fruits of his sacrifice. A full hand avails nothing to the relief of the necessitous, unless the

possessor be also of a bountiful disposition. But the heart of our Redeemer is enlarged as his hand is plenteous. He is as willing to save, as he is able. Nor shall I need to set about any long illustration of that, which wants observation more than evidence. That Christ is willing you should reap the fruits of his sacrifice, requires little proof, but much persuasion upon the mind. And here, let all his condescensions and his love confirm you, how ready, how pleased he would be to save you, to give you the peace he hath purchased, the grace he hath to bestow, and the glory he is in possession of. Should a man forego his ease and quiet, go through toil and labour, endure all difficulties, and run the risk of his life to promote your welfare, you would be left without all doubt of his readiness to serve you. And did the Son of God freely leave the bosom of his Father, and clothe himself with your flesh; did he submit to the cradle and the manger, to poverty and persecution, to a life of labour, and a death of shame? Did he deserve nothing of all which he underwent, when malicious enemies accused and condemned him with falsehood and rage, and then insulted him with a cruel triumph; when his false friends betrayed, and his frail ones forsook or denied him; when the wrath of God fell upon him, and the big grief burst out at every pore in drops of blood; when he was mangled with whips, and rent with thorns, and deformed with buffetings, and even then exposed in mock grandeur; when such an object of pity, he was loaded with the cross, and led through the streets before a gazing taunting

multitude? But what need I say more, or why speak of that last scene, which surpasses all! All this was a free endurance: he merited not the least pang, or the least stripe; he was the "well-beloved of the Father, in whom God was well pleased." Or, yet again, did he quit his love towards you and this earth together? Is he not gone up to the presence of God, to appear for you, and solicit your interests? And is not your soul the daily object of his providential tenderness, care, and bounty? Surely he is willing to give you any thing, all that salvation you need. Would God we were as ready to receive it, as he is to give it!

But let his invitations and assurances put beyond all suspicion his willingness to save you: you cannot doubt what you have from his own mouth. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Not only to save, but to seek us, that we may be saved. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and that with the most winning inducements; "for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come unto me, and drink." Thus himself spake. And how is this his gracious disposition intimated in the words of Isaiah concerning him, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied!" Words which express such a delicacy and exquisiteness of affection, as to make us feel that all the pain our Redeemer endured, was forgotten and lost in the satisfaction and delight he found in doing us service.

Away, then, with all thy fears! Thou art indeed found guilty: sin hath also defiled thy soul, justice demands vengeance, and thy own accursed wickedness hath made thee fit for the place of wrath, nor hast thou the least power in thyself to avert the dreadful ruin: but the mercy of God hath contrived a way to vindicate the glory of the divine government, to recover thee from sin, and to ward off the curse from thee; and this by the incarnation and death of the Eternal Word. Raise up thy head, and live: "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Only be sure that thou be found in him, and sin shall not be thy destruction. Only look unto him, with an affectionate loyal heart, with a heart big with detestation of iniquity, which feels somewhat of those wounds which thy sins have given him.

This would lead me to the *fourth* and concluding point, namely, what that faith is, which gains us an interest in the blessings of this sacrifice, and makes us sharers of Christ's salvation.

But I will choose to conclude, for the present, with a practical review of what has already been stated. Consider thyself then, whoever thou art, as a man, created to serve the purposes of thy Maker's glory; and yet as an insolent worm, who hast dared to join thy fellows in rebellion against the majesty of God. Thou hast cast off submission; thou hast lost all loyalty of heart towards thy heavenly king; thou hast affected independence, and arrogantly set up to be thy own master. See to it; thou hast been doing thy own will, and taking the

way of thy own pleasure: the gifts of God thou hast turned to thy own use, and vainly boasted thyself of what was but lent thee. The all-present God hath noted thee in the wanton career of thy pride and self-sufficiency; hath seen himself forgotten of thee; hath heard thy stubborn murmurings against his dispensations; hath beheld thee bowing down to the idols of life, pleasure, and interest, and praise. Ah, how art thou fallen from God and happiness! what wrong hast thou done to thy God and thy soul! The honourable name of God thou hast caused to cease from the earth; well-pleasing innocence hath left thy soul; thou art become the habitation of those enemies of God, the devil, the world, and lust. Hell, the place of sin and vengeance, hath opened its mouth, and waits till thou hast filled up the measure of thy iniquity, to receive thee. Go, gird up now thy loins, like a man; put on thy might, thou man of strength; go settle God again upon his throne; give him back the honour thou hast rebelliously despoiled him of, that his dominion suffer nothing through fault of thee: Rise up and drive before thee the traitors which dwell in thy soul, that not one of them may be left; yea, take to thee also the image of God, that he may have pleasure in thy beauty: Seest thou not the avenging sword of God held up to strike thee? Lose no time; give his justice satisfaction. Up, bestir thyself; these things are not the work of a day. Why dost thou loiter? Art thou not able? Is the task too great for thee? What? is that proud head of thine, thou hast carried so high against heaven, brought down so strange-

ly, that thou darest not attempt thy recovery; that the very thought confounds thee? Methinks, I see thee in this matter reduced to the condition of an infant newly born; thou liest utterly helpless, and without strength; unless some gracious hand succour thee, thou canst but weep and complain, and perish. The irreparable dishonour thou hast done the majesty of God, the stubborn dominion which sin hath gained over thee, the expectation of deserved and declared wrath, all fall upon thee together, crush thee to the dust, and draw forth the solemn cry from thy heart, "Undone man that I am; what shall I do to be saved?"

Here now, and lift up thy head; yet there is hope. God so loves thee still, that he hath given his only Son that thou mayest not perish. All may be well. The mighty Redeemer stands between God and thee: jealous of his Father's glory, full of zeal to bring in rebels to allegiance, he hath submitted to death, and all the merit of it he offers to thee. How extensive, how tender his love! O my brother, whether shall we most rejoice or fear, in the sight of this condescension? The wisdom, the justice, the love, manifested in "the Word made flesh," together with the interest we have in the wonderful dispensation; how should it possess our hearts! at once cover us with confusion, fill us with joy, and inflame us with gratitude! Let us think together of that God with whom we have to do. Let us think of that goodness, as well as power, which made us out of nothing; of that patience, which waits upon a world in rebellion, while no might is

wanting to execute instant vengeance; of that mercy, which sacrifices the Lord of life to save sinners and enemies. In these reflections, admiration of the every-way glorious God cannot but seize us; and entering into the awful sentiments of the prophet, we shall be ready to cry out, "Truly, O God, thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways. We cannot find thee out to perfection. But if we may measure thy attributes one by another, and count of thy justice from what we see of thy goodness, and patience, and mercy, that it is altogether infinite and incomprehensible; we must believe, that thou hast some wondrous vengeance in store for sinners. We hear of flames and blackness of darkness for ever; but we can no more measure the extent, than we can fathom the eternity of those torments, thy exact justice hath appointed as the wages of sin. We cannot but tremble, O God, upon the apprehension of thy fearful judgments, even as little as we can conceive of them; and wo were unto us, unless thy mercy were as large as thy justice. But, great God! It is as easy for thee to forgive as to punish; and thy wisdom hath discovered a way, whereby to exercise thy mercy without injuring thy justice. Nor can thy truth fail, more than any other of thy adorable perfections. We will dare avouch it therefore with humble confidence, because thou hast said it: we can no more perish, if we return, than we can escape, if we persist and die in our iniquities, for thy unalterable truth stands engaged for the one, as much as the other." Such art thou, in whose hands we are; in goodness, pa-

tience, justice, mercy, and truth, altogether infinite.

O grant us, heavenly Majesty, from the daily experience we have of thy loving-kindness and patience, to conceive the highest apprehensions of both thy justice and thy mercy! that flying from sin, we may escape thy judgments, and betaking ourselves to Christ Jesus, may inherit thy promises; judgments and promises which, upon the infallible assurance of thy truth, are laid up for the evil and the good.

SERMON IV.

FAITH IN CHRIST.

JOHN vi. 37.

Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.

GIVE me leave to hope, that amidst the various concerns which have engaged your attention since we last parted, the important one of your soul's salvation may have had a peculiar place. That you are come hither again, desirous to have "the way of God expounded to you more perfectly;" more perfectly to be informed, how ye may be delivered from your manifold miseries, how made partakers of the saving merits of Christ's atonement. Hear what your Redeemer saith, "Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out." You must come to Christ. If you do so, you have it from his own mouth, he "will in nowise cast you out;" and you know, that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away." You would know, what it is to come to Christ. My business is now to explain that matter to you. But I would ask you beforehand, is it out of curiosity you would hear

of it, to amuse a critical head? or would you know it, merely to settle you in just notions, and orthodox opinions? Alas! I should but lose my labour upon you. You may hear, you may know, but you cannot understand nor perceive. How should you? You know not, at least you feel not, that you are a sinner; you are whole, you do not need a physician; you neither can nor will come to Christ, that you may be saved. But would you know what it is to come to Christ, because whatever it be, and whatever it may cost you, you are ready to do it? Be assured that you "are not far from the kingdom of God." It will be a pleasing employment to me, to show you that faith in the Son of God, which it is my present concern to illustrate.

This was the *fourth* and concluding point. Here,

First, You are undone in yourself; a sinner, and dishonourer of God, liable to his wrath, which you have no power to avert, fallen from the purity of man's primitive nature, which you have no strength in you to recover. If left to yourself, you must abide under the dominion of your lusts, and at last perish in deserved vengeance.—This charge I suppose you to allow.

Secondly, Christ "is able and willing to save you." You have heard of the inexpressible dignity of his person, "God manifested in the flesh." His victorious satisfying, and reconciling obedience unto death, hath been set forth. You have been shown, that "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," amply and eternally he is able to save you. At the same time, his willing-

ness hath been evidently set before you. I suppose, therefore, you are also fully assured, that he hath an all-sufficient ability and willingness to apply his salvation to you. Seeing then you are undone in yourself, and seeing you are assured he is able and willing to save you; I ask,

Thirdly, Have you found yourself determined to rest your soul upon him? Are you resolved to venture all your eternal interests with him? And quitting all other confidences, doth your soul hang upon him for all your hopes? We shall be more particular immediately. For the present, hear how the Scriptures describe this committing of the soul unto Christ, from a full persuasion of his power, as saving faith in him, and as the means of your acceptance with God. "We say," saith St. Paul, "that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." What faith? His steadfast dependence upon the promises of God: "He was fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able to perform." He had the word of promise, "So shall thy seed be;" and he could trust God for the fulfilling it. It was to no purpose, that all human appearances were against him; "he considered not (did not make any account of) his own body now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb." These were no difficulties with God, and in despite of them all, "against hope he believed in hope, that (nevertheless) he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken." Do you "walk in the steps of this faith of your father Abraham?" Are you fully persuaded, that what Christ hath undertaken (the

complete salvation of sinners) he is able also to perform? Whatever difficulties lie in the way, in life and death, are you fully persuaded that he is able and faithful? And are you determined to depend and rest your soul upon him? Yours is that very "faith, which was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." By this faith, Abraham gave glory to God, ascribing to him what is his real due, power, faithfulness, and mercy. Nor can you any other way honour the Son, but by an entire dependence upon him, wherein you give him that of which he is jealous, and which is his just and proper right, the glory of being the alone, all-sufficient, and faithful Redeemer. But,

Fourthly, That you may not be mistaken, let us be more particular.

1. With an evident sense of your guilt, misery, and being without help in yourself, do you come to Christ that he may reconcile the Father to you, resolvedly determined to leave yourself with him for this purpose? Seeing an all-sufficient merit in his death and righteousness, would you that he should apply it to you, for God's forgiving you your sin, and taking you into his favour? And do you disclaim all other hope and confidence of obtaining pardon and peace with God, besides what the merit of Christ's atonement and righteousness gives you, being assured that if you fail of obtaining a part in this, you perish? Do you thus flee to Christ for refuge from the stings of a guilty conscience, the sight of your own vileness, and the apprehension of deserved wrath? So far it is well. "No flesh

must glory in God's sight. He that glorieth, must glory in the Lord;" whose "blood cleanseth from all sin," and who will be known by this name, "The Lord our righteousness." But,

2. Is this your application to the Lord Jesus for reconciliation with God, accompanied with an equally urgent desire, and which you cannot endure you should not see fulfilled to you, that he will rescue you from the slavery of sin and Satan, that he will put a new heart into you, and restore the image of the blessed God to your soul? In other words, do you approve of Christ as a master and husband, as well as a Saviour, desiring to be his with all the faithfulness of a servant, with all the affectionate loyalty of a spouse? Hath the majesty, the loveliness, the condescension of this Redcemer, engaged your heart to him, so as you find yourself ready and desirous to leave your father's house, to be subject to his directions, to be under his protection, to cleave steadfastly to him, and every way to own and honour him, whatever you may lose, whatever you may suffer? Can you appeal to your own breast, and doth that declare, that in this manner, without any reserve, you desire to be the follower of Christ, valuing him because of that freedom he offers you from sin, because of that power he would give you of becoming the servant, as well as the child of God? If having "found this pearl of great price," you are thus willing to "sell all that you have to buy it," if you are content and desirous to take Christ's yoke on you, I ask,

3. Are your prejudices against Christ and his

word removed, so that you come to him as "the light of the world," willing that he may teach you "all things that pertain unto life and godliness? Are you resolved, that in all things his word shall be your rule, that you will not hearken to any reasonings of your unbelieving heart, to the pleadings of your own flesh, to the customs of a wicked world, against it? and are you desirous that the Holy Spirit may lead you into all the truths which are therein? Are you ready to acknowledge Jesus to be the great "prophet that should come into the world," by meekly submitting yourself to the teaching of his word and Spirit? Like the convicted Saul, is your heart prepared for action, and waiting for direction, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Judge you, that in this way you come to Christ, to be justified, governed, and taught by him? But are you sincere in all this? "Show me thy faith by thy works," saith St. James. Therefore,

4. To prove your sincerity, to try the truth of your faith, what effect hath it upon you? If it be true faith, you are become a living member of Christ's body; if you come to Christ with a real sincerity in the things described, he is faithful; and it will appear, that he dwelleth in you by the Spirit which he gives you; producing such immediate fruits in your heart and life, as you must own (if you believe the Scriptures, or are acquainted with your own inability) are altogether above your power.

It is my purpose to give you a large account of this matter hereafter. Wherefore, for the present, I shall be content only to say so much in a general

way, as may serve to prevent your imagining you come to Christ, if you do not. And this will be sufficiently done, if you consider more attentively, what it is you come to him for. You know that he is able to save and help you; and you hear him say, if you come to him, he will in nowise cast you out, or reject your suit. So that if you do really come to him for the "things which pertain unto life and godliness," it cannot be that you should be without them. See then,

First, You are come to Christ, that he may reconcile the Father to you. But you will not think that you do this in sincerity, unless the choicest affections of your heart are engaged to him. "To you who believe, he is precious." And is he become so to you? Doth the dignity of his person command, and his gracious condescension constrain your love? Is it a pleasure for you to think of him in his life, his death, his glory; and is his name delightful to you? Doth it grieve you to see him daily despised of men? and are you rejoiced in the prospects of that illustrious day, when he "shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance" on his Father's enemies and his own, "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe?" Do you reproach yourself with your sins, and mourn, when you consider how they have pierced him? Do you regard yourself, and all you have, as his property, the purchase of his blood? And are you ready to part with any thing for him? If you have not been called to it already, are you willing to "suffer for

his name's sake?" Can you be content to part with your worldly friendships, respect, character, interests for him? Do you "count all these things dung, in comparison of Christ?" In sincerity, can you make a faithful answer to all these things? Then consider, farther,

Secondly, You are come to Christ, that he may deliver you from the power which sin hath had over you, leading you into a new and heavenly course of life. And what? Hath he done this for you? Are you "made free from sin, and become the servant of righteousness?" Hath no outward sin dominion over you? And are you actually at war with all that sin which you find in your heart "not obeying it in the lusts thereof?" If you commit sin, if but one sin (as far as you can see) reigns over you in heart or life, you are "not born of God." And are you become a servant of God? Are you heartily about your Father's business? Do you "exercise yourself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man?" Have you your fruit unto holiness, intent upon everlasting life, as the end and scope of all your pursuits? All your pretensions of coming to Christ, unless this be the issue, are vain; for how reasonably doth he insist, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" You overset the very design of his coming, which was "to turn men from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God." You do him the greatest dishonour, "making him the minister of sin." Nor can you have the least title to faith, "which entereth into that within the vail,

whither the Forerunner is for us entered," seeing you mind earthly things, and take up with present gratifications. But if, in this point also, you have a comfortable answer from your own conscience, I have only to suggest this farther inquiry.

Thirdly, You are come to Christ for the direction of his word and Spirit. And from the one, by the operation of the other of these, do you this day know assuredly, and rest satisfied therein, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ? Consequently, do you make Christ's words (the holy Scriptures) the guide of your feet? Do you not dispute, either to believe, or to do any thing which you find in them? Do you bring your principles and your conduct "to the law and to the testimony," to be sifted and proved? And is this done with a certain singleness of eye, meekly desiring to know what the will of the Lord is, without regarding your own reasonings, interests, or inclinations? Also, do you use a becoming diligence in hearing and searching the Scriptures; and in prayer, that Christ would open your understanding, that you may understand them? And is your diligence herein such as may reasonably convince you, that you believe the Scriptures only can make you wise unto salvation, and that you desire to learn from them all the counsel of God concerning you?—If otherwise, you cannot be a disciple of Christ; and whatever knowledge you may have picked up, your religion is of your own making; nor, however exactly you may think of Jesus Christ,

have you ever found in yourself a real want of the saving merit of his death and righteousness, and of the sanctifying influences of his grace and Spirit.

You may see now, that faith in Jesus Christ is no notional thing, that it doth not consist in your merely giving your assent to any, or all of the truths concerning him. If you are a real believer in him, there is a daily communication and intercourse between the Saviour and you. Continually sensible of your wants, your sinfulness, your weakness, your ignorance, you come to him; not as to one, concerning whom you believe that he lived and died, and went away into heaven, so many years ago, and with whom you have no immediate business to transact: but as to a living Mediator and Intercessor; "under whose feet God hath put all things, and given him to be head over all things to the church." And he on his part as continually, with a provident care, and ready hand, ministers to you the supply of your needs; so that you may truly say, you live by him. Thus you come to him; thus you receive out of his fulness. This your coming to him, is the faith in him he expects; this your receiving, is the proof that it is so.—O labour to enlarge the blessed fellowship!—And to this end, let the foundation upon which this intercourse stands, be laid yet deeper in you.—Be sensible of the blessings which attend you in it.

First, See that the foundation upon which this intercourse stands, be laid yet deeper in you. In this view,

1. Labour to discover, more evidently, how lost

and undone you are in yourself. Remember and search out more effectually your old iniquities, and see how a perverted heart turned you aside. Consider more attentively, how imperfect you now are, and far from that righteousness of heart and life, which the unspotted law of God requires at your hands; how little you could say for yourself, were God to try you upon your own deservings. Though no sin hath dominion, yet see how much of it remains within you: how "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, so that you cannot do the things that you would." Consider also the worthlessness of your holy things, your best performances. In a word, be casting up daily the sum of your unworthiness and vileness; and see what reasonable cause you have to add to the account, as you reflect upon your past, and even present state, and conduct. It is a growing discovery of the sickness of your soul, that must keep you in a more lively state and desire after the relief which Christ hath to give you.

2. Be more sensible of your insufficiency. Guard against self-dependence, a leaning to your own righteousness or strength. Labour to discover, with stronger evidence, the unavailableness of your present and future good conduct, to have justified you with God; and how, if left to yourself, you shall not be able to will or do contrary to the will of the flesh, but must quickly "make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience." The adversary will be assailing you upon this side, and endeavouring to puff you up with high-minded conceits, "as though you had already attained." Your business must be to coun-

terplot his devices, by sitting down in the lowest room, more experimentally persuaded that "without Christ you can do nothing."

3. Endeavour to gain more enlarged views of the sufficiency and fulness of Christ. Get yourself more acquainted with his dignity, "as the only begotten of the Father;" his fitness, the word made flesh; his majestic loveliness, full of grace and truth. Be more acquainted with his condescensions, his victories and triumphs. Consider him frequently as gone up to his glory, invested with "all power both in heaven and earth," the covenant-head of his church; a Lord mighty to defend, and gracious to govern; an advocate available to plead; a great and merciful high priest to bless; a forerunner; a surety. Consider him again and again, as the Judge of the dead and the living; and confirm upon your heart, how he will assuredly come again, with what power, with what glory, with what vengeance, with what deliverance. Be more acquainted with his eternal kingdom, his throne, which is for ever and ever. Labour, in a word, to make a full discovery, how mighty he is to save you. And,

4. Seek that your persuasion of his love and willingness, do grow in proportion with the assurance you have of his power. Review the gospel continually as a dispensation of mercy and grace; searching deeper into the depths of these expressions. Consider, how love was the only cause of what our Redeemer hath done for us; how love only constrained him, how freely he was sent, how freely he came into the world; how "he gave his life a ran-

som for many." Endeavour not only that you may have no suspicion of his love, but that you may have the utmost confidence in it: verily believing there is nothing he would take so ill at your hands as to suspect his kindness, after the proofs he hath given, and the assurances he hath made you, of his love.

In this way, feeling your wants, and sensible of your helplessness, assured of the Redeemer's power, and persuaded of his love, you shall find the fellowship, so happily for you commenced between him and your soul, to be enlarged, to the abundant establishment of your ways and your peace, and to the honour and praise of his saving grace.

Secondly, And to quicken you in all these things; also, be sensible of the blessings that attend you, in this intercourse and fellowship with the Son of God.

And these are no less than a certain part in all the "promises of God, which in Christ Jesus are yea and amen;" and all of them yours, seeing you are Christ's, not only by purchase, but also by that vital surrender you have made of your whole self unto him;—forgiveness of sins—the adoption of a child—a new and child-like disposition of soul—the daily care of the Redeemer—a delightful fellowship with the faithful—a thankful enjoyment of God's creatures—and a hope, full of immortality—are the blessings which you enjoy in this new state to which you are admitted.

1. Forgiveness of sins. "I write to you, little children," saith the beloved disciple, because "your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." Hear,

thou little child, that hast found thyself hopeless and helpless as an infant, that art come to the everlasting Father, and hast cast all thy cares upon him, thy sins are forgiven thee for his name's sake. Say they are many, great, aggravated; sins of a scarlet dye, and red as crimson; yet they are purged away for his name's sake. As a thick cloud they hung black and threatening over thee, and kept from thee the light of heaven; but now they are blotted out, as a cloud which the wind hath carried away, and thy God remembereth them not, as if they were cast into the depths of the sea. For "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." To thee there is no condemnation, for thou walkest after the spirit, thou art spiritually-minded, led by the spirit. No condemnation, by reason of thy past sins and present infirmities; the wrath of God removed, the accusations of Satan unheard, the sentence of death remitted. Blessed man "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!" Blessed man, "unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity!" O join the song of the prophet, and say, "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains: O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

2. The adoption of a child. Thou, who wert sometimes far off, art made nigh by the blood of Jesus, become a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ: no longer now "a stranger and a foreigner, but a

fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God." For "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." And thou dost receive him, as the Christ, the Son of the living God; cordially receive him, as thy Prince and Saviour. Know then, God condescends to be thy Father. Stagger not at so great a thing, as though it were too high for thee: it is Jesus gives thee this glorious power and privilege. Himself saith, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." You cannot deny the relation, without denying Jesus to be the Son of God, seeing he evidently calls you his brother. So God had said, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." See, to what an honour thou art advanced, thou son of the dust, thou sinful worm, thou once heir of hell, to be the child of the Lord Almighty! And as a child, he doth and will treat thee; "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth thee;" he "will spare thee as a man spareth his own son that serveth him;" he will correct thee in love, "even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." Go to, ye children of princes, be ashamed of your honours, the servant of Christ is the son of the high God. He will not stoop to your dignity, in exchange for his own. He hath a Father in heaven, to whom he can come with boldness, upon whom he can securely depend, a Father al-

mighty and most merciful. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."

3. A new and child-like disposition of soul. To have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," to be "partaker of a divine nature," to walk with God as a dear child, are blessings which cannot be valued by the children of this world; which cannot be valued, as they deserve, by the children of light. What, is it nothing to you, ye believers, that, once dead in trespasses and sins, sin hath now no longer dominion over you? That alienated from the life of God, as ye naturally are, yea, possessed by that carnal mind which is enmity against God, ye now find yourselves "renewed in the spirit of your minds," changed into the image of the Lord, and that "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord?" That "ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father;" not a slave-like, but a child-like disposition towards God, the seal of your adoption, the "earnest of our inheritance?" Reflecting upon what you were, and what you are, and what lies before you, are these things nothing to you? Let your thankful hearts be witness. True, you have sold all to buy Christ, but what have ye gained already? Ye cannot repent of, ye cannot but rejoice with joy unspeakable, in the purchase ye have made!

4. The daily care of the Redeemer. "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." What, to death only? Did death quench his love? "He ascended up on high to receive gifts for men, to ap-

pear in the presence of God for us." His love for his people will never end; "neither pray I for these alone (his then disciples) but for them also which shall believe in me through their word." This is his continual intercession for us. Read in his history the tender concern he felt towards his followers; and in your hourly needs, he bears the like love to you. Say, thou believing soul, why, chargeable with so many sins and so much unworthiness, do not the terrors of a guilty conscience follow and dismay thee? Why, though altogether weak, and still inclined to evil as thou art, do not sin and Satan every hour get advantage of thee? Whence is it, that amidst all the temptations which a beguiling world presents continually to thy eyes and heart, thou art not seduced from "the hope set before thee?" How comes it, that thy trials are so proportioned to thy strength, that thou always findest a way to escape? Who provides for thee those awakening instructive providences and means, thou daily dost meet with? And who, at the same time, those secret and suitable suggestions thou perceivest to rise within thee? Sit down at the close of the day, and review what hath past in it, what thou hast gone through, how thou hast been protected, supported, blessed; and thy very soul will be filled with admiration of that loving care, which the great Head of the church exercises towards thee; thy heart will grow big with thankfulness and praise; thou wilt be wanting some pious friend, with whom to communicate the overflowings of thy joy, to "declare what the Lord hath done for thy soul."

5. A delightful fellowship with the faithful. I speak not of the various ways wherein the true members of Christ do communicate to and with one another, nor of that excellent charity which enlarges all their hearts, and inspires them with all readiness to this communion; but I speak of the delight that accompanies it. The rest of the world having no common head, nor satisfying hope, live hateful unto, and hating one another. O the uncomfortable state, where hatred, variance, emulation, strife, and envy, rage in every breast! But the company of the faithful live together in "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness." For why, all their interests are one, their enemies, their warfare, their dangers, their fears, their hope, their head, their spirit, their crown, their kingdom, one: all alike "members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the promises." With such as these thou livest, since thou hast known the Lord Jesus; partaker of their faithful admonitions, tender consolations, and affectionate prayers. And didst thou ever know before, what society, what friendship was? Now thou canst truly say, "All my delight is with the saints that are in the earth." "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

6. A thankful enjoyment of all God's creatures. It is written, when God had finished the creation of the heavens and the earth, that he "saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." In like manner, since a new life hath been breathed into thy soul, thou seest all the creatures

of God, that they are very good: the conveniences, the comforts of this life, houses, friends, food, raiment, every thing good. God's various provision is become satisfying, content sits upon thy heart, gratitude rises upon thy breast, while all is "sanctified to thee, by the word of God and prayer." This may seem a light matter to the discontented world, but thou receivest all as the gifts of God for Jesus' sake, with whom he freely giveth all these things. This sweetens them all, that in Christ Jesus thou art reinstated into a right in them. And say, if, while thou regardest them as so many tokens of the love of the Father, they are not inexpressibly delightful, and do not build up in thee a reviving and high expectation of those bounties, which are stored up for his children in the everlasting world? Thus every thing contributes to render the believer blessed: and while he knows himself unworthy of the least o all God's mercies, the very least bounties of heaven draw out well-pleased expressions of praise, and minister complaeency and happiness. But why stop I upon these meaner things? Forgive me, thou heir of glory, that thou hast been detained thus from the refreshing views of thy heavenly inheritance.

7. A hope full of immortality. To read to thee the Scripture descriptions of the joys above, were but to transcribe that which, with deepest impression, is graven upon thy heart. There faith hath painted them in the most lively characters, and hope glows with inextinguishable ardour for the enjoyment of them. A hope which is an "anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," amidst all the various

calamities of life. A hope that "maketh not ashamed of whatever reproaches, or sufferings. A hope that purifieth even as God is pure. A blessed hope, that waits for the glory of God, with abundant rejoicing; while, with abounding hope, thou lookest forward to the everlasting kingdom of Emmanuel, a joy springs up within thee "unspeakable and full of glory." And if to see the land before thee, be a source of so much joy, how then the possession of it! To enter into the new Jerusalem, to "see God as he is," to "be for ever with the Lord," to be "fashioned like unto his glorious body," to be "presented without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish," to taste of, and feed upon those full joys and ravishing pleasures, which are to be had at the right hand of God for evermore: Lo, this is thy inheritance, thou believer! But what the sum of this glorious inheritance, no earthly tongue can express, no mortal heart conceive. Yet, whatever it be, it is thine, the gift of God to thee in Jesus Christ; for his will is, that "they whom the Father hath given him may be with him where he is," may "enter into the joy of their Lord."

Often reckon over, with thankful acknowledgment, these blessings which attend thee in thy fellowship with Christ: endeavour daily to get a clearer and clearer evidence of thy interest in them. Hereby, thy love of Jesus shall increase; that love shall draw thee still nearer to him; from whence thou shalt experience growing strength and consolation to be inspired into thy soul, to the increase of his praise and glory, and of thy peace and salvation.

SERMON V.

THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

It was made too sadly evident, in the first of these discourses, that sin had deformed the soul of man, ruined the image of God stamped upon us, and had set us in such a state of alienation from God, that, while he was forgotten and slighted by us, having no manner of influence or rule in our hearts, we were found to be intent upon carnal gratifications and earthly pursuits, and affecting above all things self-love and self-pleasing. With the miserable bondage and tremendous danger of this condition, the true believer hath been made acquainted. He hath been led to Jesus for deliverance, and, to his inexpressible consolation, he finds, that Christ hath set him free; that this mighty Redeemer hath heard his suit, and "renewed a right spirit within him;" that he dwelleth in his heart, and liveth in him; and that he is actually joined to the Lord, having the same mind, temper, course, and way of conduct

in him, "which was also in Christ Jesus." Now, this entire and wonderful change, which Christ brings about, by his grace, in the hearts of those that humbly come to him, is by St. Paul termed, with great propriety, "a new creature;" seeing herein a man is so fashioned and formed again, that he is quite another sort of a thing from what he was before. This is the assured and infallible event of union with Christ; for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Nor can any thing avail without it, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, no manner of external privileges or services, but the new creature only. It is indeed the main end of Christ's coming down from heaven, of pardon purchased and offered to us, of Christ's dominion above, and of his mission of the Spirit, and of faith itself. This is the one end of the whole, that, being partakers of a new and divine nature, and thereby recovering purity of heart, we may see God, and at last fully enjoy him. I would call this new creature, the work of Christ in us, or the power which the humble soul (the person brought to the teachable, abased, and manageable disposition of a little child,) hath obtained, to turn from sin unto God, by means of faith. Whether we consider Christ living in his members, or whether we consider the desires of a truly humbled mind, this new creature is the completion of such desires, the life of such a member, and is at once the great evidence of our union with Christ, and of the sincerity of our faith.

I shall go on, therefore, to the *second* main point

above laid down, which is, *the description of the new creature.*

But I cannot enter upon this matter so hastily, as not to beg one moment, that I may previously engage your attention to it. You are about, every one of you, to be brought to a trial by the word of God, at the bar of your own consciences, whether ye be in Christ, or not; that is, whether God be, this day, your Father, or your avenger; whether ye belong to Christ, or Belial; whether ye be inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, or children of wrath. And such an inquiry, one cannot but judge, must awaken, or comfort, or quicken you. Truly, it is no light thing, either to be, or not to be, in Christ. To be in Christ! Hear how our apostle triumphs in the blessedness of such a state! "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, if ye are Christ's." Not to be in Christ! How doth all, more than conceivable, misery, stand proclaimed against such a condition, in that one awful word, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

A question of such moment as this, warns you to lay aside vain curiosity, and deceitful excuses, and all application to others of what you shall hear; and to put on meekness of spirit, and the discernment of a single eye, with a heedful attention. It calls upon me to address you with caution and freedom, that I may neither go beyond, or fall short of the truth, in this description of the new creature.

May God be with us herein, both one and another, that neither our preaching, nor your faith, may be found vain!

That you may enter with me the more readily into this description, I shall lay before you the plan upon which I intend to proceed, and the particular views I am to have before me, whilst I shall be describing the character of the new creature.

As to the plan, it is this:

First, To let you into the nature of the character, from a general account of it; and then,

Secondly, To go through a survey of this character, in the several branches of it; and this, by laying open his soul to you, in an illustration of the apprehensions of his understanding, the choice of his will, and the exercise of his affections.

Thirdly, I will represent to you the expressions and workings of such a renewed soul, in his thoughts, words, and actions, whether they regard what he doth not do, or what he doth.

As to the views I have with me, they are these: *principally*, to give an account of the new creature; *secondarily*, to show the opposition there is between this character, and that of the careless sinner; *collaterally*, to undeceive the formal professor. In pursuit of which scheme, I shall make it my business, as I go along describing the new creature, to set the natural man over against it; and also carefully to mark the difference, wherever the formal professor, who is indeed altogether unrenewed, (as he will find by the two characters to be drawn up of the new man and the old,) seems to carry a resem-

blance of the new creature. And in all this, my design is to be as practical as possible; and therefore I purpose to lead you into all these points, in a way of inquiry; wishing, that while you are made to see what the new creature is, you may take the matter to yourself, and examine if you have, or have not a title to that character.

The *first* thing I have to do is, to let you into the nature of the new creature's character, from a general account of it.

And here I will represent him to you, as one whose eyes are opened to a right sense of himself and all things, or who is humble; whose main business in life is the care of his soul; who is ready to this spiritual work; and who hungers for growth in it.

1. His eyes are opened to a right sense of himself and all things, or, he is humble. It is only a just estimation of ourselves, and of the other things with which we are concerned, that can show us our friends and our enemies, the path we must take and that we must avoid, our interests and our dangers. This is what leads the way with the new creature, putting every thing upon its right footing, and keeping a man's face directly set towards God; and therefore I place this just estimation of things, this humility, in the front of the new creature's walk. So our Lord places it, you know, as the introductory grace, in his sermon upon the mount. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Now by this I mean, not that humiliation or

heart-breaking concern, which attends the first awakenings out of a state of sin, brings the sinner to the foot of the cross for pardon, grace, and acceptance, and so lays the foundation of the Christian building; but I am supposing the foundation already laid, and therefore intend here no more than humility, the Christian grace, which alone keeps up, as well as raises, this spiritual house. And this I have called a just sense and estimation of all things.

I shall now show you more particularly, what I mean by it. More fully, therefore:

Humility hath placed the man in his right station in the order of beings, causing him to regard himself as a creature of God's power and goodness, and a dependant upon his sovereign will and government; and, in this connexion, hath taught him to know, that by his sins, the perverse rebellion of his heart, and the wanton licentiousness of his life, he hath darkened God's glory, disturbed his government, abused his goodness, wearied his patience, and provoked his justice to a deserved sentence of exclusion from rest and happiness. But then it hath disposed him to see withal, that God's mercy is infinite, that Jesus, the Son of God, is the messenger of unbounded peace and love, and, leaning upon that merciful loving-kindness, he hath learned to grieve for those transgressions of his, which made such a contrivance of suffering goodness needful, and to apply thereto with a heart full of self-loathing sorrow. He hath learned to see himself "less than the least of all God's mercies;" and there-

fore he is in a way, wherein he receives the very least blessing with thankfulness and acknowledgment, and parts with it again, when God sees fit, without murmuring; a way wherein he quietly bears the visitations of God's hand, and patiently waits for the gifts of providence and grace. Whatever he hath of endowment, wealth, or influence, he considers it is a trust, to be used for the interests of God, and the welfare of man. Of a lowly mind, he is apt to esteem others better than himself. He feels vanity and insufficiency in every earthly thing, but knows, that there is an abundance of substantial bliss, which he cannot now comprehend, in the world which shall be. In his passage through life to glory, he finds himself sadly beset with wakeful and mighty adversaries without, and continually in danger of being betrayed by a treacherous heart within; he perceives himself without all skill to observe, and strength to oppose, the one and the other; and experience hath told him, that he must be overpowered unless he be divinely supported. In a word, he finds himself a sinful creature, (and none he finds worse than himself,) a poor helpless creature cast upon mercy, and whose main business is, by God's help, to get out of sin, and above this world, and to work out salvation, the eternal state of holiness and happiness.

This is what I mean by humility. This is seeing with clear eyes, and making a right estimation and judgment of all things. And even thus the new creature thinks and determines of himself. He regards himself as a sinner deserving death, whom

mercy only suffers to live and hope. He regards himself as a creature subject to God's government, and as a sinner, in need of, and liable to, his corrections. With all obedience, he would submit to God's rule; with all patience and thankfulness, he would endure his chastisements. All that he hath and is, he regards as God's property, and to be employed to his glory: he regards heaven as a treasure indeed; the delights of time, as a toy; and the devil, the world, and the flesh, as his adversaries, opposing his entrance into life. He walks forward, impressed with a needful fear, in circumstances of so much hazard, and so much importance, as he plainly sees his are, while in the body.—If you can say now, "This is the sight and sense I have of myself, and of the things present and eternal," I may not withhold from you the truth and the blessedness of your state; you are assuredly *a new creature*. This I shall quickly help you to prove, if you do, upon sure grounds, apply this humility to yourself, when I shall come to speak of the remaining parts of this general description.

The careless sinner is the very contrary of all this; and, I fear, a character too frequently to be met with. He hath his eyes sealed up, and his heart hardened, to all spiritual and eternal things. He may know, that God made him; but he lives entirely at his own will and pleasure. He hath not the least thought of the dishonour he is doing to his Maker; and very little reflection he makes, of the danger himself is in, and of the wrath which hangs over him. He is more insensible to God's good-

ness, than he is to his justice; and leaves God, Christ, and eternity, far above out of his sight. He careth for none of these things; he is a man of the world. What he hath he reckons his own; nor, inquiring who gave it him, doth he once imagine that he is but a steward. Ready he is to swell and triumph upon every thing, wherein he seemeth to himself to excel others; and the more abundant his wealth, knowledge, or power is, the larger his vanity. As he is unthankful for what God bestows upon him; so he must have no cross in his way: he frets and galls himself under corrective dispensations; and doth nothing but murmur, and lie in impatience, till he see the end of his affliction. He hath not the smallest apprehension that the world is his enemy; all his views lying on this side the grave. Give him his heart's content in the indulgence of his body, and of his worldly prospects, and let him withal enjoy his humour, he desires no more: he will be sailing down time very quietly, and be, for the most part, as much at his ease, as if there were no death, nor eternity.

But here the formalist will be interposing; will be thanking God he is not as this man is; will be pleading his freedom from harming others, his exactness in duties, his fair show in the flesh, having no gross sin resting on him; his benevolence and good deeds. Truly, all this may be, and yet nothing right at the bottom: after all, you may have as little pretence to humility, as the, in appearance, more careless sinner. You own that you are God's creature; but you own not that you are a sinner; that you have dishonoured

your Maker, abused his mercy and his patience, justly incurred his wrath, forfeited all title to the very least blessing at his hand; that such a sinner you are, you are unworthy of the very bread you eat. All this your unhumbled heart disallows. You cannot judge of yourself in this manner, while you can see none going beyond you in regularity, decency, and services. You judge rather, that such a one as you must be a peculiar favourite of heaven; that your conversation deserves and demands some regard of your heavenly Father towards you; and confidently trust upon your formal prayers, and alms, and fastings, that they shall not be in vain. But, after all, where, I pray you, is the difference between the careless sinner and yourself, as to the matter of humility? He thinks not of his sins; you deny yours, or excuse them, or set up your good works as more than countervailing them. Less than he, you dread God's justice; nor is he more insensible than yourself, to the riches of redeeming love. He values himself upon worldly endowments, which he truly hath; you boast of spiritual qualifications to which you have no pretence. He and you are unthankful, fretful, and murmurers alike. Equally, ye are strangers to all true sorrow for, and hatred of sin; and while he cares not about it, you do not fear lest you should fall into it. In a word, he is in subjection to earthly lusts, and you are enslaved by secret pride. Surely then, when this matter is sifted, both he and you are the natural man still; notwithstanding the different appearance ye make.—For the new creature is humble; and,

Secondly, His main business in life, is the care of his soul. The new creature, as his eyes are open to a right estimation of himself and all things, so, in consequence hereof, he finds another employment upon his hands, from what men naturally think of, and from what the interests of this life seem to demand. He makes a new and heavenly use of life and all the things of it, and engages therein in a peculiar and reserved manner: he is busied about the one thing needful; and he will make all other things subservient thereto. All that he doth, tends towards heaven; and every action of his life is tinctured with, and hath the stamp of, eternity. This one point he labours above all; by the grace of the Spirit, to subdue and mortify more effectually those selfish, earthly, and carnal dispositions, which corrupt nature hath given him; and to confirm and strengthen those gracious dispositions of soul, which will render him qualified for glory. Being born from above, he seeketh the things which belong to "God and his righteousness;" he lives by faith; what he sees not, hath a prevailing influence with him, beyond all which he doth see. He regards life as a pilgrimage, and, like a stranger from his home, contends for the house which is eternal. Nor doth he mind any other thing in comparison, but becoming meet for this inheritance of the saints. This is the business of the humble man upon earth.

But the careless sinner hath another sort of employment. He is for this world: and not an action of his life bespeaks any higher regard. He knows no fears, but those of want, sickness, disappointment,

or disgrace; and his largest wishes are laid out after security and ease, grandeur and wealth, reputation and respect. To provide for indulgence, and to preserve his health, to cover his head, and clothe his body, to enjoy his friend, lay up a store for another day, and care for his family; these are the highest and best things he has in view, the great concerns he has in life.

What doth conscience say now? Which way is your course directed? Are you labouring in the road that leads towards heaven, or in the beaten path of the world? Are you entered into the humble and heavenly scheme and business? And what evidences can you produce, that you are engaged in this new work? Surely you cannot be at a loss to know which hath most of your thoughts, care, and solicitude; which you prefer, and are in fact most diligent to obtain, whether earthly or heavenly things? If your heart be right, and your mind renewed, your sentiments are these: "Mistaken man that I was, how vainly did I once imagine, there was no other nor greater employment of my days, than to procure the full supply of my wants; that I had no other enemy to contend with, but the confinement, dependence, and various evils of circumstances too narrow; that I had no other good to pursue, than that enlargement of fortune, which might render me my own master, furnish me with what I should desire, enable me, at a convenient time of life, to sit down at my ease, and be under obligation to none! But then God was little thought of; death and eternity were far away. Ah! now that I see what I

am, what lies before me, and the work I have to do, in a short, and withal most uncertain day; I am even oppressed with the importance of every hour I live, and tremble at every step I make, lest, in the midst of surrounding dangers, I should wander from the right way, the subtle enemy should take advantage of me, and causing me to offend so good and gracious a father, draw down upon me his displeasure." Are these your sentiments? Can you truly adopt them, and say, "Thus I judge, and thus I live?" But where are your proofs? Have you shaken off all gross sins? Do they not even occasionally gain over your consent? Are you maintaining the spiritual war with "the law of sin which is in your members," manfully contending to bring every lust "into subjection to the law of Christ?" Are you got above the world? And when the matter is brought to a fair trial, doth it appear, that you value God's favour, more than all manner of reputation, wealth, ease, and worldly comfort? Can your diligence and importunity in all holy employments, witness for you, that you desire the knowledge of God, and labour to walk dutifully and joyfully before him?

If you are the new creature, the approving voice of conscience makes answer within you, "This is my study; herein I have, and do exercise myself;" and you will be adding too, "but I sadly come short herein." This you may. But the inquiry at present is, whether you are sincerely about this heavenly business? And, with a little attention, you will easily see, whether this or the next world doth

bear the sway with you.—What think you of St. Paul? Doth not every thing you hear of him, his ceaseless labour, his patience in tribulation, his undaunted boldness, and his unshaken constancy; doth not all this convince you, beyond suspicion, that he was one of a heavenly disposition, that he lived "by faith and not by sight?" You see St. Paul's course and way, what a general tendency he had towards God: and is yours under the same direction? are you like-minded with him? But did you read in his history, that this great apostle was neglecting his ministry, and paid little regard to the work upon which he was sent; did you find, that he had been very earnest to amass wealth; upon all occasions was forward to entertainments and feastings, affected men's favour; wanted nothing so much as his ease, and to be beholden to no one; that he seldom thought of dying, being unwilling to part from the world? Did you read this of St. Paul, instead of what is told you concerning him, you would take no long time to determine him a man, who, caring not for God, "minded earthly things." If what hath been now said of St. Paul may be said of you, I beseech you to judge of yourself, as you would have done of him in like circumstances, and conclude, that since you are not about this new and heavenly business, but have your conversation in a worldly manner, you cannot be the new creature.

Nor must the formalist pass without notice, the sinner in disguise, who appears like the new creature, seems to be very busy in the work of heaven, is rid of gross sins, and exact in hours and seasons,

in the service of the knee and the mouth; and yet, after all, is a stranger to this new business, hath never entered upon it, nor so much as conceives what it means; foolishly conceiting, that attendance is devotion, and form is religion. Truly such, whatever show they may have of the new creature, in times of solemnity, and in freedom from scandalous transgressions; yet, were the dispositions of their hearts, and their vain and trifling way of life, when the task of boasted duties is not upon their hands, carefully sought out, would be found nothing different from the, seemingly, more careless sinner. If you confine your attendance upon God and your regard to the business of religion, in certain times and places, and are without a customary attention to God in the ordinary offices of your station, and the employment of your every hour; if, your public or private worshippings excepted, you are even as others who slight the solemn assemblies, and spend no time with God in retirements, and yet are civil, courteous, humane and decent; if you can discover betwixt them and yourself no manner of difference in temper and carriage, they and you seeking the interests of life, gay, and given to vanity, alike; I must entreat you not to mistake yourself for one who is entered upon the heavenly business, and is the new creature. His whole conduct is the very reverse of yours; you remark that it is so, and are secretly displeased with that exactness and seeming austerity, which appears to you in all the parts of his demeanour.

The sum of this is: The new creature, being humbled, lives for the next world—while the care-

less sinner, and, with him, the mistaken formal professor, are without all due feeling to spiritual things, and labour for the life that now is.

To humility, and making the care of his soul the main business of life, the new creature adds, in the

Third place, A readiness and certain peculiar forwardness to this spiritual work. We hear often of this readiness. "Put them in mind to be ready to every good work," says St. Paul: and the example of the same apostle will furnish us with instances of it. In opposition to the importunity of all his weeping friends, too fondly beseeching him to decline the danger that awaited him at Jerusalem, he says, with a constancy and fortitude which will not yield to any present considerations, "I am ready not only to be bound, but to die also for the name of the Lord Jesus." And again, he speaks elsewhere of his "readiness to preach the gospel at" Rome. Our Lord tells us of a readiness of spirit; and we read more than once of a ready mind. Where this readiness is not, there can be no sincerity, no love, nor heartiness. Would you account that servant faithful and well-affected to you, who is backward and unready to obey your orders? You expect the directions you give, should be regarded with a becoming forwardness: it is this qualification which endears to you your dependants, and persuades you of the regard and affection they bear you. Just so, the new creature is prepared for the service of God. He hath the loins of his mind girt up for the heavenly work. He doth not put off God with

promises, as the one son in the gospel, who when sent to labour in the vineyard, said, "I go, Sir, but went not." Nor, like the other, doth he refuse present duty, afterwards repenting, and going. He is ready at the call of Providence and duty. Observe him in his course; how naturally he turns from sin and temptation, how easily he falls in with all good works, and all means of grace! He hath a quick eye to spy out temptation; seeing danger where a thousand others suspect no harm: and what he finds to be hazardous, he hath no heart to meddle with. He is not apt to hold parley, to cavil and dispute about which course he shall take, when the least thing sinful lies in his way: "he determines immediately, and declines the action at all adventures, in despite of persuasion, fear, and all manner of threatening consequences. On the other hand, he makes haste to keep God's commandments; he hath his hand and tongue ready for every useful and honourable work, according to his ability; he needs not to be invited to the house of God, nor be called upon to communicate; his heart is in his duty, whether it be to wait upon God in his ordinances, or to serve him in his calling; to benefit the souls, or succour the necessities of his neighbours. In a word, the new creature is a new nature; and whatever we do naturally, we do readily, and with willing forwardness. Wherefore, if the new nature be in us, we shall be ready to the new work, and in our way to heaven shall be resolutely and briskly carrying it on, both in striving against sin within and without us, and in exercising ourselves in all man-

ner of good. If you have thought yourself the new creature hitherto, and have judged that you are humble, and entered upon the business of heaven, see if your conversation be accordingly, if you be ready in this new work.

But if you have no heart to this work, putting off duties to another day, ready to debate which course you shall take, when the danger of reproach, shame, or loss, threatens your steadfastness; if you have no edge and keenness to a good work, to use the means of grace, or to distribute out of your abundance; but must be dragged and drawn to such things; if your ears are dull to a serious discourse, your eyes heavy to discern both the appearances of evil and the opportunities of usefulness, and your feet slow to carry you from what is bad, and yet slower in their motion towards good employments; if you are loitering day after day, and neglecting the heavenly work: if this be your case, whatever you have of freedom from scandalous iniquities, and whatever harmlessness you may have to plead, it will profit you nothing; but you are a "slothful servant," or rather you are a slave; you are forced to duty, not set upon it of inclination and choice, and cannot be regarded as the new creature.

Rather, you incline to the way of the careless; but are confined by a little slavish fear, which he is unacquainted with. He, easy, happy man! how expert and forward is he, to every thing which concerns his present interest! how ready to pleasures! how at hand for carnal gratification! Here he joins in at once, without solicitation or entreaty.

Any thing of this is the very joy of his heart: vanity, amusement, wealth, company, and mirth, find him an obedient and most willing servant, ever prepared to wait upon them with a ready and glad attendance. But to do good, to pray, to hear, to speak of a serious subject; O what a sluggard he is! How dull the employment! how burdensome the task! how tedious the time! Truly he is out of his element; he likes it not; "his soul loatheth this heavenly food."

You may see now yet more evidently, what I mean by the readiness of the new creature. It is a walking in duty, just as the careless doth in sin; exactly such a forwardness in heavenly things, as he hath in earthly; expressly such a backwardness to sin and temptation, as he hath to holiness and the means of grace. It is not barely a saving a man's self from gross iniquity (which is the way of the formalist), but bearing a resolute course against all sin; not only (with the formal) a show of well-doing, but an address, diligence, and heartiness to the heavenly work.

And yet, to complete the whole of this general character, there must be,

Fourthly, A hunger after growth in this heavenly business. I have intimated what this new work is, and hope you understand it to be this: a contention with the power of sin in us; that is, with our lusts or evil dispositions, which are in us by corrupt nature, and have grown strong by custom and compliance; and a like contention also with every fruit of this corruption in our lives, be it great or little.

This fight with sin is one part of the work. And the other is, the confirming those new dispositions or tempers which are infused into us by the grace of Christ, when by faith we are united to him; and which fail not to show themselves in all holy conversation, in the outward carriage. These dispositions are, in scripture language, called the new heart, or spirit, as being the opposites to the natural frame and disposition of our souls. Now, to grow in this work of mortifying sin, and confirming the power of godliness in the soul, he who is the new creature finds an eager, ceaseless desire. This our Lord himself calls hungering and thirsting; by which he gives us to understand, that as much as the person who is hungry or thirsty longs after and craves the refreshments of meat and drink, even so doth the true Christian desire freedom from sin, and the more perfect renewal of his heart.

Now, if you are the new creature, you are no stranger to this holy and spiritual hunger and thirst; you are inwardly straitened about your work, till it be finished. Insomuch, that should God give you your heart's desire; should he bid you, as he did Solomon, "Ask what I shall give thee;" your answer would be, without the least delay or hesitation, "Give me, O God, out of thy bountiful goodness, that which I would choose, before the honours of a thousand worlds. Give me a heart free from sin, that I may never more offend thee! Deliver me from the remainders of corruption that dwell in me; mortify all the pride, worldliness, and lust, which still defile my soul; bring every thought

into subjection; yea, deliver me from the whole body of sin. But especially, O my God, kill and destroy my peculiar corruption, that malicious enemy I carry in my heart, which cruelly enslaves, and still obstinately besets me; consume, and cause it to perish utterly. And, heavenly Father, since thou hast made me bold to speak before thee, I will require at thy hand such a spirit as thou wilt delight in. O fill my heart with love towards thee; with submission, dutifulness, zeal for thy glory, and every other disposition which can render me fit for thy service here, and for thy presence for ever." Say now, doth your heart cry Amen to this petition? If not, you are no new creature. And if you are the new creature, your most fervent, constant request, before the throne of grace, is this very thing; that God, by his grace, will free you more and more from the power of sin, and promote in you the power of godliness, so fitting you continually for his presence and everlasting kingdom. For, you know, God hath bid you ask this, and hath promised to grant it. Most expressly doth he give us confidence, that our requests for the renewing influences of the Spirit shall assuredly be heard, through whose merits we may approach God with boldness: "Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask." Do you ask this, therefore, with an unwearied importunity, looking that your suit be granted? You do not indeed "hunger and thirst after righteousness," if you do not thus importunately ask it, or are content and satisfied, when you see not that you receive growth

in it. Doth, then, a desire of growth in grace make you diligently to pray? And doth prayer keep up, and improve watchfulness against sin, and a desire to please God, upon your heart? These are the immediate fruits of prayer; and if this frame of mind grows upon you, you may be sure that the power of godliness is springing up under it. Without such prayer, and seeking such fruits from it, you may not judge that you have the spiritual hunger and thirst, nor, consequently, are the new creature.

But, do you seem to yourself to be well enough already? Are you satisfied with your present measure? Are you in a way wherein you think you need not growth in this new work? And are you without hearty desires of improvement therein? Do months and years pass over you, find and leave you at the same stand in religion, and yet you are well content with yourself? I must be free to assure you, you are quite out of the way. You never humbly and heartily entered upon the Christian business; or, if you did seemingly run a little, you have been hindered; you have this day no life in you; like a dead man, you have lost your appetite; and, whatever you may seem, you are but a formal professor. For see you not, that a constant, earnest desire and endeavour to carry onward the work, the whole work of righteousness; see you not, that such a desire and endeavour to get above every sin, and to grow in every grace, is as evidently the effect of a truly humbled, renewed, and heavenly mind, as a desire and endeavour to amass wealth, is the

effect of covetousness? He is not covetous, who, content with what he hath, desires not, nor labours to be rich; nor are you a new creature, who, resting upon the present stock of holiness, conceive you have attained, and are not solicitous for more.

But, observe now the hunger of the careless sinner; and surely the desire of the formalist is like his! He hungers not for righteousness, but for indulgence, wealth, honour; all his appetite is for some earthly thing. And the more he enjoys it, the keener he grows upon it, still running farther from God, daily filling up the measure of his iniquities, and heating the furnace of God's wrath yet hotter against him.

What hath been said, may serve, it is hoped, to give some general notion of the new creature's character; and this with the more distinction and usefulness, as it hath been set in opposition to the character of the careless sinner, and separated and distinguished from the false show of the formalist.

And for the present, we will part with this short observation, that these two characters (for in reality they are no more,) have a directly different tendency. The one of them leads upward, every thing draws towards heaven: in that, all the views and pursuits centre, and in that it will gloriously issue. The other is altogether earthly, and bent downwards. And where will that end? O, ye too easy wretches, would God ye might lay it to heart! If God be true, it will assuredly end in eternal damnation!

SERMON VI.

THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

I am willing to hope, that what hath been generally advanced in the former sermon, upon the character of the new creature, hath served to show you its peculiar and spiritual way and manner, and also excited a becoming importunity to see it more perfectly and exactly drawn, to the end, that with more attention you may trace out its features, and discover with greater certainty, if the lineaments of it are to be found upon your soul.

Let us follow then the strong and very visible lines, in which the Scripture paints this man of Christ, within and without. And,

First, Let me lay open to your view the state of his mind.—Now the soul of man hath, especially, three more eminent powers or faculties—understanding, will, and affections: the offices of which are; that of the understanding, to think, apprehend, and judge of the things which lie within our reach; that

of the will, to determine and choose what hath appeared to be good and eligible in the decision of the understanding; and the business of the affections is, to spur and quicken us, both to judge and choose, and also to carry our determinations into action. Now, through the fall, all these are put into disorder, or rather are drawn a wrong way. They are not indeed destroyed, but they are corrupted: they remain the same powers they were before, though turned, as to their disposition and employment, to the most base and dishonourable uses. As to spiritual things, the principal of which are, the ever blessed God, and the happiness of communion with him, which are the proper objects for a reasonable soul to lay itself out upon; as to these, there is a blindness and darkness in our understandings; we know them not, nor feel the weight of them with any suitable impression, nor care to busy our thoughts about them; while the things of sense do very naturally and easily engage our thoughts, and carry away our attention. In consequence of this, the will is directed, on the one hand, to refuse spiritual, and on the other, to choose visible things. And so, of course, our affections are engaged in pushing us on to pursue such present things only, as the blind judgment proposes to us, and the perverted will fixes upon us. The understanding of the natural man is an ill guide; it performs not its office aright, doth not discover where true happiness lies; but, in determining thereon, blindly decides for the present life, and sensual gratifications. The will, in consequence, chooses that which the understanding represents to

it as good, and sits down intent upon enjoyments, which are merely of a worldly or bodily nature: upon which the affections, the faithful servants of these higher powers, bestir the whole man industriously to reach after those mistaken, deceitful gratifications, which the blind judgment hath approved, and the seduced will hath made its choice. Hence it is, that we find in us such a deadness either to see or feel spiritual things, and such a drawing towards the things about us, even when the soul is renewed, and these powers of it turned the right way. When the understanding is enlightened with the knowledge of God, the will chooses him as the chiefest good, and the affections force us with an holy importunity towards him. Corrupt nature still makes opposition, and, like a strong tide setting against the rower, checks the freedom of our way, nor will suffer us to gain any ground, but by incessant labour. Thus it is at best; while the violence of this stream of corruption bears the generality of mankind down along with it. From submission to this, arises that strange forgetfulness of spiritual things, that deplorable disregard of eternal interests, that living without God, so common in the world; whilst every faculty of the soul is warmly engaged in the pursuits of sense, even so as to mind them only, and day by day grows more confirmed in aversion to God, and sinks faster and deeper into carnality.

Such is the state, and such are the consequences of the corruption of man's nature; thus are the powers of our souls perverted and abused. But the new creature hath, in some measure, recovered the

right use of all these faculties, and, by the operation of divine grace, they are restored to their proper offices: God is known, and chosen, and sought after with earnestness. Thus much in general. I come now to be more plain and particular, and to show you the new creature in the apprehensions of his understanding, in the choice of his will, and in the exercise of his affections.

1. The understanding of the new creature hath a peculiar and different apprehension, and forms another sort of judgment concerning all things, from what the careless sinner, or the deluded formalist hath, or is apt to do. "The natural man," saith St. Paul, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual, judgeth," or discerneth "all things." There is a spirituality, an humble and heavenly tincture, in all the apprehensions of the new creature: whereas there is a carnal turn, self-sufficiency and earthliness, in those of the natural man, whether he be formal or careless. We will illustrate this in some particulars.

With regard to the perfections and presence of the blessed God.—The new creature is possessed with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, sees and heartily approves the eternal power and infinite wisdom, by which the mighty Lord ruleth over all; considers him, in supreme sovereignty, lifting up the sword of unavoidable and exact justice over the universe, to constrain, and pouring out with a boundless, gracious hand, blessings and happiness, to re-

ward obedience. He beholds, and acquiesces, and his soul cries within him, "Worthy art thou, O God, to reign! Thou almighty King, I tremble and rejoice before thee!" The goodness and mercifulness of God, he regards with inexpressible approbation: goodness, willing to make happy, and mercy, sparing to consume a world of rebels; mercy pardoning, and goodness embracing returning apostates. Such tender, such divine love, what sentiments of delight and gratitude doth it raise within him! While he views the patience of God, the wonderful scene of forbearance which he sees daily exercised towards sinful creatures; beholding how God is provoked every day; how the insolence of transgressors calls down vengeance; and yet, how God sits and considers it with a majestic serenity and composure, and with an immoveable dignity endures it; nor with the besom of destruction sweeps at once into hell the whole race of evil doers;—covered with shame, for the hardness of himself and others, all his soul stands amazed, and magnifies the mysterious, incomprehensible God. But that which brings all his views of God home to him, is his peculiar apprehension of the divine presence—He sees him, who is invisible; sees him, filling all things; finds himself naked and open to God's eye, encompassed by him behind and before, the very secrets of his heart unfolded to him. Nor does he draw back from God; he rejoices in God's presence with him, and is careful above all things to improve it. It is his only consolation, that God is near him; a Being so gracious, and mighty, and good, so able and wil-

ling to cure all his diseases, and to sooth and sanctify all his griefs.

The apprehensions of the new creature concerning God are (you must not omit to observe) all humble; there is a mixture of the dependant, the sinner, the child of God, and the expectant of glory, which goes with them.

But the natural man, whether he in a manner forgets God, or hath some show of acquaintance with him, yet is altogether a stranger to such humble and becoming apprehensions of the divine majesty, goodness, patience and presence.

The careless sinner, you know, hath set up his idols in his heart; vanity, interest, and lust, are the gods he serves. Upon these he is dependent, and from the gratifications of them he expects all his happiness. Hence the God of heaven is excluded: not that he hath no apprehension of him at all; alas! he is sometimes so apprehensive of his power, majesty, and universal eye, that he cannot be easy and at peace. An apprehension he hath of God's dominion; he cannot gainsay the too evident truth, but he secretly disapproves it, he trembles at the thought, and wishes from his inmost soul there were no such Being to control and trouble him. An apprehension he hath too of God's goodness and mercifulness; but how unrelenting and impious the conclusion he would needs draw from it, while from hence he takes to himself a freedom and license to commit and continue in sin, instead of melting into shame and sorrow upon the thought and remembrance of abused goodness and slighted mercy! Just so also

he apprehends of God's patience: because God delays to strike, and avenge himself, he sets his "heart fully to do evil;" every way labouring to "turn the grace of God into licentiousness," and taking occasion from the very perfections of God, to harden himself in sinning against him. Horrible imagination! You would not thus deal with God, you verily judge! But by far the most of you do, even every one among you that abideth in known sin. Look to it: you shall find that I have spoken the very desires which have passed through your heart, and possessed themselves of you, although, through the wantonness of your ways, and almost total forgetfulness of God, you may not have noted them. Indeed, how should you note them, while you have so little apprehension of God's presence, that you live without him in the world, disengaged from all thought of his nearness to you, unless when unavoidably you must reflect a moment, that "there is a God that judgeth in the earth;" when either you are in a way of hearing his threatenings, or are suffering his corrections, or are made to see his providences?

Nor are the apprehensions of the formal professor any thing different from yours, concerning the perfections and presence of God. A speculative, and (if I may so call it) a traditionary knowledge of God, a conformity to modes of worship and the externals of religion, may make a man strangely to mistake himself; and he may be ready to take it for granted, that all is well, though there be in truth nothing of humility in all the apprehensions which

he hath of God. You are often upon your knees I allow: but had you not rather (might it so be) that you were left to your own government and direction, to do as yourself should please, and, it may be, to be secure of an eternal possession in the gratifications of this life, entirely your own master, and disengaged from the submission, which now you see you must of force pay to God? Is there not somewhat in this proposal with which you could heartily acquiesce? And if so, what avails it that you pay God never so many compliments? Still you are the very reverse from the new creature, in your apprehensions about the divine Majesty. And so also, though you may talk never so finely and never so frequently of God's goodness and mercifulness, yet hath not the one or the other taught you to loathe yourself for your iniquities, and your heart to rise against sin with a sincere and loyal indignation. Just the contrary; sin and you are well reconciled, and you would as willingly continue in the practice of it, as the careless and more easy sinner, were you not afraid. The patience of God hath neither wrought with him nor you, to lament your hardness and impenitency under it: but, insensible to God's forbearance, you are presumptuous, and he is secure. The apprehension you have of God's presence with you, hath no delight in it: you know not what communion with God means; and the reflection that God is near, while it troubles and terrifies the careless, doth not please you. In a word, the only difference between you in this respect is, that formality hath blinded you, and lust hath hardened him: both of you un-

humbled; he hates God, and flies from him; you dread God, and pay him a forced attention. His apprehensions of God are full of dislike and terror; and yours are without love and reverence.

There is then, you see, the widest difference between the new creature and the natural man, in their apprehensions of God himself. The apprehensions of the new creature are peculiar to him; and the like peculiarity is observable in his judgment of all other things. We will endeavour to set out a few of them in one view.

With regard to *Christ*. The new creature judges him to be "the way, the truth, and the life;" admires his power and ability to save; views and reviews, with secret satisfaction, the victories he hath gained for man upon earth, and the gifts and graces he now dispenses from his throne in heaven; considers him as the Lord of all things, and author of everlasting salvation; and knowing the utter want he has of such a Teacher, Saviour, and Lord, fixes his eye upon him with loyal and complacent regard. With full persuasion of Christ's fitness every way to effect the deliverance of fallen man, his soul is drawn unto him, and cries out, "My Lord, and my God!"

With regard to *the Spirit*. Aware of the perverse inclination of his nature, and convinced of his own insufficiency, to attain the least measure of that purity of heart, which shall lead him to the sight of God, he apprehends the need he has of this divine illuminator, guide, and comforter; regards him as the Lord and giver of life; approves, with wonder

and thankfulness, his unseen agency upon the souls of men; admires his fitness for these offices, as God; and blesses his condescension, that he should prepare himself a temple in the hearts of his polluted creatures.

With regard to *sin*. Looking upon the blessed God, he judges of it, as that which defiles his majesty, and would dare to attempt his throne; as what perverts all the gracious contrivances of infinite wisdom, neither suffering the Maker to inherit his glory, nor the thing made, to prosper and be happy: he sees divine purity abominating it, and divine goodness abused by it; justice most righteously lighting upon it with inexorable vengeance, and mercy, only infinite, capable of forgiving it. He sees a troop of the most deformed monsters couched under every act of sin; insolent rebellion, stupid insensibility, stubborn undutifulness, forgetful ingratitude, and odious defilement. He sees misery following upon its heels; and acknowledges how equitable God is in all the present and approaching ills, which either now attend, or hereafter await it. He views it with self-reproach, nor can express the loathsome sight he is in his own eyes.

With regard to *God's law*. The new creature reads therein the undoubted duty of man to God; approves the purity of soul it enjoins; and therefore, that likeness of God it would restore the heart to; admires it, because it is strict and exalted; nor could like it so well, were any thing of what others esteem severity remitted. Just as it is, and because it is holy, just, and good, he loves it;

nor can he think without the highest complacency, of the dignity to which he shall be advanced, when he shall fully be transformed into it.

With regard to *Providence.* Not only in God's visible and magnificent works, which gloriously display to him the divine wisdom and power; nor, again, in those tremendous and mysterious ways by which God hath directed all things, from generation to generation; not only in these general manifestations doth he acknowledge God, but with a peculiar and submissive regard doth he observe God in the particular and fatherly government which is exercised towards himself. He owns his hand in the visitations both of chastisement and prosperity, seeing love in them both. He is convinced, that his soul is God's especial care; while, with grateful wonder, he reflects upon God's forbearance and gentleness towards him; the wise and strange means and contrivances God hath used with him; the kind disappointments, and most inviting encouragements, he hath met with from him; in a word, the long and watchful discipline, which an affectionate Providence hath exercised upon him.

With regard to *death.* He reverences it, because it is the sentence of the Most High against a rebellious world; and yet he acquiesces in it, as the messenger of life and liberty. He pays a solemn and steadfast attention to it; neither seeing it advancing upon him with fright nor unconcern. The thought of it is near, and abides with deep impression upon his mind. He wishes to be more reconciled to it; yea, even to long for its approach.

Meantime, he lives in the sight and expectation of this decisive event, advised of its uncertainty, but assured that by and by he shall be brought to "the house appointed for all living." As every advancing day brings it nearer, he feels the impression more interesting, important, and abiding; he feels time grow more valuable, and life becoming continually more vain.

With regard to *heaven*. "Blessed region!" all his soul cries within him; "Peaceful dwelling! where all the family of love meet and abide; where God, the tender Father reigns, pleased at the joy and happiness he gives to his sons and daughters; where Christ, the well-beloved Son, the kindest master, the dearest brother, delights himself in his elect; where ever-faithful angels worship; and saints, saved and restored, for ever sing their grateful praises. Eternal house! which time shall not destroy; whose foundations are the immoveable perfections of the God that changeth not! Valuable treasure! which neither moth can corrupt, nor thief steal! Pleasure satisfying to the fullest tides of joy, and yet delighting still, as if never tasted!" Thus he cries, in the views of heaven; and all else, with him, is avowed vanity. Defect, decay, uncertainty, and unfitness, are evidently stamped upon all earthly grandeur, wealth, and pleasure, in his apprehensions of them; since he is grown ambitious of a perfect, enduring, uninterrupted, noble, and reasonable happiness, which God hath in store for them that love him.

With regard to *hell* also. Hell, the place pro-

vided by infinite justice for sinners; the punishment, which a righteous vengeance hath prepared; the wages of sin, and the very consequence of it! This state of darkness and misery he regards with a continual and confirmed abhorrence, and learns, from the sight he has of its horrors, more devoutly to hate that sin, which forces the Father of mercies so fearfully to correct, so infinitely to punish his own creatures. He sees it, and suspects his steps, lest they have any tendency towards it; he views giddy multitudes dancing gaily upon the brink of it, and trembles at the horrible view.

Finally, with regard to *eternity*. What wondrous depths of being doth he find in this one word! Ten thousand ages are just nothing in comparison; and when exerting all his powers to reach after it, he adds ten million more, and doubles and redoubles the account: still he finds that he advances not, and sinks under the vast and cumbrous thought. Full of this impression, he is either pleased or trembles, as he sees or suspects his title to happiness therein; the days of man are shrunk into the abidance of a moment, into the remembrance of yesterday that is past; and with a pilgrim's hasty unaffected eye, he regards the things of this life.

Such as these are the apprehensions of the new creature about these important things: in this manner he judges of them. Possibly thou hast never made such reflections upon thyself, and many of these thoughts may be new to thee: but, if heartily thou dost consent to them, now they are told thee; if it be in this humble way that thou judgest of the con-

cerns of God and thy soul, as far as thou knowest them, this is the proof that thou art the new creature. Apply this description of the renewed understanding to thy heart; and if thou canst answer, "Thus and thus I judge; you have opened to me views with which I readily agree; they correspond with the temper and tone of my soul, which relishes, and is in harmony with such kind of apprehending;" trouble yourself no farther; it is well with your soul. Neither the formal nor the careless can join with you in any, the least of all these things.

Say, ye formal professors, who seem to be the servants of God, and are not; whose attendance upon hours and places of devotion with scrupulous diligence, bespeaks, it were to be imagined, the deepest impression of these spiritual things abiding upon your souls: say, do you judge in this manner? Alas! all your apprehensions are but speculative and curious; a knowledge puffing you up; a judgment light and unsettled, and which bears no prevailing influence in the heart. Your views of all these things are without due reverence; and you set up a title to them which is not founded in humiliation, but pride. You know Jesus to be the Son of God; that he came forth from the bosom of his Father, and is gone unto him again: but you regard, you speak, you think of him with an heart unacquainted with the endearments of gratitude, and unsubdued by the profusion of his redeeming love. You know that he was upon earth, and is now in heaven; but judging not that your sins have brought ruin upon your head, which you cannot escape but by betaking

yourself to his protection, you read of him with indifference, and hold no daily intercourse with him, as the very life and food of your soul.—You will be talking, I know, of grace, and sanctification through the Spirit; will be taking up the words of the new creature; and entreating, as it would seem, that the grace of God might be with you always; that God would not withhold or take the Holy Spirit from you. However you have not discovered the corruption of your own heart; how far removed your soul is from God and holiness; you know not therefore your wants and your weakness: ready in your own strength to encounter all opposition, because you are ignorant of the power of sin, which dwells and reigns within you; and therefore you do but call upon the Spirit, to give you the strength which you do not perceive you need, to heal the diseases of your soul, which you do not complain, nor feel the pain and the burden of. And see then, what vain and unsettled apprehensions you have of this divine Author and Giver of all light, and love, and comfort. And how is it you judge of sin? You disdain scandalous vices; cannot endure knavery, drunkenness, or lewdness. But even these you abhor but from custom, and the judgment of the world. Do you hate sin, because God doth; because of the dishonour it brings upon his government; because of its ingratitude and real filthiness, in the presence of a gracious Father, and pure God? Do you hate every sin? the pride, stubbornness, and unbelief of your own heart, as well as the gross sins of others you are so continually crying out upon? Alas! all your judg-

ment concerning sin is but worldly, outward, and respecting others: your own transgressions you can pass over lightly, count little of them; and be well content if you can force a tear, in the remembrance of some blacker passages of your life, when the decency of some more solemn action would seem to demand it from you.—Would you choose God's law, if you might avoid it? Do you not take offence at it? Are you not willing to believe it is not so strict and exact, as yet you cannot but suspect it to be? You should have more room and indulgence given you; cannot digest the nicety and exactness it enjoins; would prefer a religion that was more easy, which would not require so much attendance. You regard God's law with a certain secret aversion to it, and all the obedience you pay it, is against the grain.—The providence of God; have you a discerning eye to search it out, or a quiet mind to submit to it? You can talk of it, I know; you can condemn others, when resignedly they bear not correction and disappointment: but when the matter is your own, then the case differs. Then you can murmur and complain, rely upon your own prudence, or trust upon man for help; as if you believed not, that God ordereth all things about you. You know, in a certain way, that all creatures wait upon God, and that he distributes his blessings to them, as he will, out of the storehouse of his boundless goodness and fatherly care: but you are not apt to observe his dispensations, and in your own particular find no complacency and seeurity of soul, that he condescends to guide you. Just the contrary;

his daily bounties, and the more extraordinary interpositions of his love, come down upon you unobserved: and, when you are afflicted, you acknowledge not his hand; restless till you are delivered, and murmuring because you are stricken.—You can talk too of death: but you care not to think of it, to bring it near, to live in the constant expectation of it. It weighs with you so lightly, that you can follow one and another to the grave, and yet retain the confidence of life: or if for a moment you see yourself as within the reach of death, yet, by and by, the frightful monster disappears, and troubles you no more.—You can talk of heaven also: but you have not explored the distant country; the glories of it, the joys at God's right hand, are unknown to and untasted by you. When you hear of heaven, as the seat of blessedness, you cannot but desire that some day you may have your place there; because you cannot but wish to be happy, (as who does not?) However, you find yourself in no manner of haste to be gone to this better country; nor, with all your uniformity of worship, have you once laboured after those dispositions of mind, and that spiritual attire, which becomes the company and the business of heaven. The best apprehension you have of heaven is, that it is a state you would possess, when you have done with the world; and which therefore you take up in your thoughts, when you have no other employment.—And what is your judgment of hell? You judge it terrible: but do you also judge it just; no more than the due recompense of sin? Have you judged it the just wages of any sins your-

self have committed? Look well to it; you may perhaps find, that you only suspect its reality; that you have but a faint apprehension of its horrors; that, to say the utmost of your judgment about it, you regard it only as the wages of gross and notorious sinners, while such as you have done nothing to merit it. The view of hell hath not taught you the sinfulness of sin: wherefore, regarding your own iniquities with a superficial and favourable eye, you have never yet learned to fear the vengeance of God, proclaimed against all manner of transgressions against his Divine Majesty.—And eternity, that awful endless state of being; doth it not pass before your mind like an airy form, scarcely gain remembrance there, like a dream in the night? Your apprehension of it is so unsubstantial, that the impression it makes vanishes as soon as it appears; and you remain in gay security, as if there were no such state: your days go forward, and you draw nearer to the wonderful abyss, and yet, approaching as it is, you regard it with the same cold stupidity; nor doth it gain any influence to weigh prevailingly in the soul.

Speak the truth now:—With all the show of religion you are so vain of, are you not a very trifler with God and your soul; rather playing with them, than acting with any sense and meaning? Surely your judgment is so vain, slight and momentary, in the greatest matters of salvation, that you must be said to apprehend them, as if you apprehended them not.

The careless sinner is more consistent; he doth

not pretend to what he is not. He knows all this just as you do; thinks of these things too, when he cannot avoid it; and the reflection dismays him while it lasts; nor can he be at rest, but while security, interest, and pleasure keep it at a distance. The careless sinner is a downright natural man; nor doth he labour to cheat himself, or to deceive others, into an opinion that he is one who minds the things of God and salvation. If God will save him just as he is, it is well; and some day or other he shall be at leisure to thank him; but, for the present, he hath too high and lively apprehensions of the things about him, to conceive any great apprehension of what is absent and unseen. He knows Christ to be the son of God, and the Saviour of men: but Christ offers him nothing which suits his palate. His expectation and hope spring from carnal joys and present interests; and since Christ leads him not to these, he must be forgotten. He sees not how the Holy Spirit should give him worldly ease, peace, and gratification: it is not sin which he dreads, but misery; the disappointment, cross, and injury of the day. His own will and pleasure is his rule; and self-gratification extinguishes all manner of attention to the law, the pleasure, and will of God. Providence he never thinks of; so carried on is he in a scene of contrivances, to prevent misfortune, to purchase wealth, or indulge pleasure. He has no time to think of death, amidst the hurry of business, or the entertainments of company and recreation. Heaven must be minded at another season; when the projects of life shall have been completed. Hell can weigh but little

with him; seeing the great evils he feels and fears, are the frowns of men, the damage of his fortune, and the disappointment of his pleasure. He cannot look into eternity; some object of sense ever catches his eye, and engages his attention. He is not, you find, entirely without understanding: but the apprehensions of the things of this life outweigh the other, and leave them out of sight. His heart unhumbled and unbroken, he promises himself happiness upon earth; and, however unjustly, conceives that the increase of wealth, advancement of station, the well-spread table, and all things at his command, will render him happy. Under these deceitful apprehensions he lives; looks no farther; nor feels the importance of spiritual and eternal interests, but with a secondary impression, with a weak and vanishing influence.

Thus now you may be able to discover what kind of apprehension in all things the new creature is possessed with, and how different it is from the judgment of the natural man, whether formal or careless. You see his apprehensions are humble, near, and I must add, enduring: for enduring they must be; not a sudden heat, caught up upon occasions, seeing these apprehensions are the very principles which direct the whole course of the new creature, determining his choice, and influencing his hopes and fears. There is the widest difference, you find, between the practical judgment of the renewed understanding, and the cold speculative apprehension of the unrenewed: this apprehends all the things which concern salvation, dryly and curi-

ously; that, humbly and awfully. Their apprehension differs, like that of two men about a storm, one of whom was securely looking at it from a cliff, and the other tossing in it, and anxious for safety.

But possibly it may serve yet more evidently to evince this difference, if you have an illustration of the whole in one view. See then under which of the following descriptions you are ranged; which of the words with which I conclude, most aptly represents your judgment and apprehension.

The careless sinner takes up his word, and says, "Ah! that my lot were fallen to me in a fairer ground; that I were not entangled by the cares, nor encumbered under the toils of life! How happy would my situation be, had I wealth that would afford me ease and honours, that would bring me independence and respect! What wouldst thou more, my soul, than, disengaged from care, to enjoy thy chosen friends, to cover thy table with plenty, to bring forth the choice wines, and to rejoice over thy labours? What wouldst thou more, than that the beholders reckon thee the happy man; who, gotten above fear and want, nor needeth the help of others, canst follow thine own will, and pass thy days at thy heart's content; no impertinence meeting thee, no vexation thwarting thee, no pleasure unsatisfied, no wish unanswered? It is intolerable, the insolence of oppressive greatness, the slavery of business without end, and the want of time for quiet, freedom, and friendship. When will it be that I shall be set at liberty? When will the rising days find me void of the anxious thoughts

which now meet my opening eye-lids; and when the nights close upon me undisturbed, and surrounded with the cheerful voice of satisfaction and grateful society? Then adieu carefulness, we will eat and drink and be merry; joy shall wait upon our steps, ease abide in the dwelling, and happiness and contentment shall seat themselves upon our breasts: independence, wealth, and ease, ye that alone make life a blessing, when shall I be satisfied with you?"

But, "What!" replies the Christian, "are these the joys of man; this the greatest happiness thy soul desireth? Thou fool and blind! these are pleasures, which satisfy not; these are treasures, which perish; these are vanities, which the wind carrieth away. Had I no better things in prospect than what ye can afford, ye highest earthly gratifications, scarcely could I be content to live! Away from me, ye trifles! I relish you not, since my eyes are opened, and the things which are not seen, are presented unto me. Alas! how lightly did I once think of those awful concerns that now possess my soul with wonder, and rise upon my mind with growing importance, as I consider them with nearer attention!—now, Lord! I stand naked before thee; the creature of that power, wisdom, and goodness, by which all things in heaven and earth are, and in respect of which, both earth and heaven are but as the dust of the balance. How is it that I stand in the presence of thy majesty, holden as I have been with so many rebellions, and debased as I am with so much impurity? But thou, injured, patient God! thou wondrous abyss of mercy and forbear-

ance! I can no more endure the thought of being separated from thy all-gracious presence and favour. Thy nearness to me, this alone can be my joy, my consolation; this the only protection I can hide myself under; this the blessedness which must feed my soul with delight. But what am I, that I should presume to approach unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes? It is through thy all-sufficient name, thou mighty Jesus, that I can make bold to rejoice in God, my Lord, and my portion. Thou, most loving Redeemer, hast stood between me and vengeance; thou hast prepared the way for me to thy Father and mine. Ah! what bounties do I this day enjoy at thy hand! By thee I live, and through thy Spirit I hope. He whom thou hast sent unto me according to thy promise, hath delivered me from the accursed slavery of sin, the remembrance whereof is more bitter unto me than gall and wormwood; he hath brought me to the glorious liberty of being the servant of God, whose service I find indeed to be perfect freedom. And thou, Lord God, wilt no more forsake me; I shall be under thy guidance and thy care all the days of my life: gladly do I leave my soul and body to thy keeping. Yea, and under thy protection will I await the king of terrors, expect the solemn change which death shall make, hanging humbly and steadfastly upon thee. And then, adieu all fears of that tremendous hell, the place of endless wrath! Then welcome, ye glorious everlasting heavens; welcome, eternity, where ages shall rise and pass, and new ones succeed for ever; welcome, ye awful things

which shall be hereafter, the expectation of which fills me with fear and hope, and in the views of which I rejoice and tremble, and feel all the world to be nothing!"

But methinks, I hear the formalist long ago crying out, "Thou art beside thyself, thou art righteous over much. We will not walk, O my soul, with the wanton; we will not drown ourselves in drink, nor defile our hands with dishonest gain, lest we make our name to stink upon the earth. But it is good for us to provide for the future; it is good to be something in this life; good it is, that men pay us respect; that we have wherewith to pass our time, without being obliged to others. But God must have his hours, the church and the closet may not be forgotten; and then we shall return to enjoy what God hath given us. Then we shall spend our days in quietness, and relish the comforts of ease, company, and amusement. Yes, my soul, we will steer even in this matter: we will not neglect our souls, like the careless, nor will we deny ourselves, like the precise. God shall have his due; but wealth, which brings us esteem and honour; harmless pleasure, which renders time delightful, shall not be forgotten. We will live as long, and as easily as we can, and when we can live no longer, then God shall receive us, and provide a reward for us, which he will pour plenteously upon the head of those who have not lived like other men, nor profanely turned away from his service and altar."

And now, brethren, you have the whole of this matter laid before you. Search then and try if the

truth be in you, by this first mark of the renewed mind, right apprehensions in the understanding. Happy your case, if upon good grounds ye are able to say, " Hitherto, I find in me the tokens of the new creature." But if you fail here, you shall have no title to apply to yourself any part of the description which is to follow: you cannot be in Christ.

SERMON VII.

THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

I am rejoicing in hope, my brethren, that while I am describing the character of a new creature, many of you, by the grace of God, will become such. A prospect which indeed, emboldens me to use such plainness of speech with you. For is it not, ought it not to be my heart's desire towards you, you especially, that ye may be saved? But what! will you, that while I see many among you, who are walking after the course of this world, and not after Christ, whose end must be destruction unless ye be plucked out of the fire, I even let you contentedly alone? You would not, I am sure you would not, that I should deal thus unfaithfully by you. Ye are not yet so much your own enemies. Ye desire to be happy; and, believe me, it is all the harm I wish you. But ye cannot be happy, if ye abide in your sins. These, I would needs you should leave, and you care not to part with. Here is all the quarrel

between us. You like not to be told, plainly, "unless ye repent, ye shall perish;" and I, while I live, have nothing else to tell you. Say, we are sometimes troublesome to you, and raise some uneasy reflections upon your minds, yet I hope you may be the quieter for it upon your dying beds, and then, I am sure, you will thank us. I shall esteem it a blessed thing, if I may any how help you to such an end. But this cannot be, unless you be in Christ: and none are in Christ, but those who are a new creature; and it is plain many of you are not, from the carnal, worldly lives ye lead. And who those are among you, I will endeavour with all freedom to show you.

You have seen, in what a peculiar, humble, and spiritual manner, the understanding of the new creature judges and apprehends all things. The most important matters wherewith man is conversant, were taken under consideration, and illustrated also in a way of opposition to the judgment of the formal and the careless.

2. I shall introduce what we have to say concerning the will of the new creature, which is the second power or faculty of the soul, with this observation, that such due apprehensions in the understanding do naturally influence the choice of the will, and, consequently, prove themselves to be right and just, by the power they have to engage the heart. Unless our apprehensions do draw the will after them, all our supposedly renewed way of judging, can be but speculative and mistaken. To instance in one of them:—If our apprehensions of heaven be humble

and spiritual, that state of glory will have such a preference in our choice to the best things here, that we shall find ourselves, comparatively, indifferent about them. Pleasure will have lost much of its alluring power over us; the relish for interest and honour will be abated. Rather, we shall fear these present competitors for our souls against heaven, be aware of them, and care not how little we deal with them, knowing that we have a lasting treasure and a sure inheritance before us in the eternal world. Now, such a rejecting the things of life in comparison with the determination we have for the other world, must effectually evince an understanding, in this particular, renewed. And should we find a like effect wrought upon our choice by the other instances of a renewed understanding above produced, we must remain confirmed, that our apprehensions were those of the new creature, and that our judgment was enlightened by the Spirit and word of God; that we, "who were some time darkness, are now light in the Lord." Whereas, doth not such gracious influence manifest itself in the choice of our wills? We must needs have been mistaken, if we had conceived our apprehensions were right, and our judgment in spiritual things just. Here then is so fair a foundation laid, on which to build what the determination of the will, under the guidance of an enenlightened understanding, must be, that it shall hardly be possible to miss of seeing it: for which reason I shall not stop you particularly to observe, what choice doth really follow in the will of the new creature, from every one of the former apprehensions.

The result of the whole of them, or the choice of that person's will, whose mind is renewed, shall rather serve to show the new creature, in this second faculty of the soul. Now, inasmuch as choice supposes the offer made to us of different things, the new creature is peculiar to his determination, choosing that which all others refuse, and refusing that which they choose. Of the two different portions, God and the world, he prefers the former, and rejects the latter; of the two differing courses, obedience to God and pleasing ourselves, he refuses his own pleasure, and determines for God's: while the careless and the formal choose directly the other way; the world hath with them the preference to God, and the pleasing themselves to the obeying God. In which two points doth principally lie the choice of the renewed will.

1. The new creature chooses God for his portion, and not the world.

This the careless sinner doth not, his choice being just the other way. He doth not indeed determinately say, "I will have nothing to do with God;" but he is so much better pleased with the things about him, that he cannot find what possible happiness it could be, to have God for a portion. He cannot understand what fellowship with God means. All that he hears about it, appears to him an unintelligible jargon, and he is apt to count it no better than mere enthusiasm. Indeed he would not that God, whose perfections he knows are infinite, should be his enemy; he would not be without the blessings of his goodness, nor would he fall under

the vengeance of his power. But he wants, that God should stand by at a distance, and suffer him unmolested to take his fill of the joys of life. This is the measure he would hold with God. He would enjoy the world, and withal that both God should not see it with displeasure, and should also uphold him in it. He hath not the least inclination to God as a portion; but so obstinately is he bent the other way, that he will have the world, though he knows it is upon the forfeiture of God's favour, and at the hazard of his wrath. He will have the enjoyments of life at any rate, and his continual conduct is but a scene which evidences how cheap he holds God, in comparison with his ease and interest. Every action bespeaks a denial of God, and a refusal of him in his heart, seeing he assiduously lays that out upon any thing, and next to nothing, rather than God.

The formal person hath indeed a better appearance. He looks like one concerning whom you might be ready to conceive better hope; imagining, from his exactness and decency, that his whole heart was indeed with God. Nay, and no doubt himself imagines no less. But let him be brought to the scrutiny, and he no more shall be found to have given his heart to God, than his thoughtless neighbour. Say thou, who art fair to look upon, dost thou know what it is to have made a full, free, and deliberate choice of God for thy portion, thy present and eternal portion, so as thou canst say from the bottom of thy heart, "Here shall be my rest for ever; I have none in heaven but thee, nor is there any upon earth that I desire beside thee?" Art thou so well dis-

posed toward the perfections and majesty of God, that thou canst find an entire satisfaction of thy soul in his favour presence, and love, and count the loss of every other thing but little, if this may be allowed thee? Dost thou not find thyself secretly declining the offer; that thou canst not for thy life bring thy heart up to it? Hast thou not many reserves to make, many pleasing endearments of life, which interpose and leave God but the second in thy choice? When God demands thy whole heart of thee, hast thou no oxen to prove; no ground that thou wouldst go and see; no wife that thou hast married, that thou canst not come to him yet? Doth not experience show thee, thou art better pleased with one thing and another in the world; seduced by which, thou art content to forget God, and art but holden of constraint when thou approachest to worship him?

But the new creature hath no reserves: he goes over to God through Christ with the full bent of his will; nor thinks he hath done any great matter, that he rejects every other thing in respect of him. He can see happiness no where else: let him have God, and he cares for nothing beside. He can find no substantial happiness here, but in the nearness of God with him; and he acquiesces with full content in the expectation of that blessedness, which the presence of God shall minister hereafter. Jealous he is over himself, lest God in all things should not be preferred, watching with a sacred jealousy that his heart be not seduced, and casting out with indignation that lust, which would be setting up an interest within him against his heavenly Father. In a word, he

hath so evident a conviction of the justice of God's claim in him; and from experience, as well as promise, so clearly discovers, that happiness directs him this way, as without gainsaying of heart, to prefer spiritual to sensual gratifications, an eternal God to a perishing and wicked world. Could you look into his soul, you might read such determinations as these strongly graven there:—"Away from me, ye trifles of life and time, ye kingdoms of the world, and all the pomp which belongs to you! Wealth and magnificence, airy grandeur and reputation, gilded vanity and naughty pleasure, I will none of you all. God is my portion. God unchangeable and eternal, ye fading joys, ye phantoms which seem to be what ye are not, is my inheritance. Here will I rest, in God the chief, the only good. God in Christ is all I can need, and infinitely more: let me have him, and I am satisfied; I can have no more. And without thee, thou fountain of life and bliss, all beside were nothing worth."

2. So again, of the two different courses, obedience to God and pleasing ourselves, he refuses his own pleasure, and determines for God's will. This the natural man doth not; the determinations of his choice are all on the side of his own pleasure; he wills after the flesh. He hath exactly the wrong bent, leans always to the part of indulgence, and starts aside from submission. Nor in this matter is there the least difference between the formal and the careless; only that bears not such evidence of a perverted choice as the other, and therefore must be under greater likelihood of continuing to be de-

ceived. A man of an unconverted heart may, by his own reflections, or by the instruction of others, be brought to see the fitness of choosing God's will, and refusing his own pleasure in comparison therewith. Perhaps, being convinced that he ought so to be determined, he is ready to persuade himself, that he actually is now come to so just a choice; seeing he finds himself fully purposed about the matter for the future: but the heart being unchanged, the fit soon goes off, the purpose dies away, and the man remains just as he was before. Outsides here are nothing to the purpose, where the inquiry is, whether a man rejects sin, with the free and constant dislike of his heart, and as freely and constantly cleaves to God's will. No man chooses sin for the sake of sinning, in downright and avowed opposition to God: this were too horrid, perhaps, for any thing but Satan. And therefore no one may cheat himself by conceiving that he rejects sin, merely because directly looking upon it he cannot but disapprove it. The matter is, whether there be a steady and determinate denial in the heart of all such things as, being contrary to God's will, are sinful. This the natural man doth not, nor can do; he constantly inclines to them, and as constantly declines from all those things wherein obedience to God doth consist: and this perverted choice manifests itself in him every hour and moment of his life. Search out your spirit, I pray you. Do you find upon the trial, that you regard sin as a greater evil than suffering, or reproach, or loss of reputation; that the main inquiry you make about every thing you do is, whether it

be sinful, or leads to sin; that you choose to do your duty, though you are sure you shall smart for it somehow or other, resolutely opposing all the suggestions of flesh and blood? This is the way of a renewed will: but it is not your way. Your determinations are irresolute; your heart goes not in with them, freely and fully; you find a secret and prevailing drawing back within you, when you would enforce yourself to close with God's will in opposition to that of yourself and others, of your interests, reputation and pleasure. The new creature chooses God's will with an hearty consent; would not do the least thing which is contrary to it, nor keep, if he could help it, any thing within him, which in the lowest degree should thwart or control it. He has a watch upon the evil tempers of his heart, and labours ever to oppose them. He would bring "every thought to the obedience of Christ." He finds himself secretly constrained to look all difficulties in the face, in the way of his duty; makes no known reservations, nor comes short at any time, without acting revenge against sin and himself; he can appeal to God, "Lord, thou knowest my heart: thou seest what is in me: thou seest that I would not willingly offend thee in any the least point, or leave undone the smallest thing thou wouldst have me do. Yea, thou knowest, I desire with all simplicity and sincerity to be pure and holy in thy sight."

In these two particulars the choice of the renewed will doth consist. And these, as leading determinations, do continually draw the choice after them in every lower particular. Choice of God and of obe-

dience, like the course of a river, gives all other determinations of the will a like direction: insomuch, that just as we choose or refuse, with regard to these two, the general bent of our choice is in all other points. Let us instance in the case of the means of grace, for the better illustrating the renewed will.

The man of an unrenewed heart doth not choose worship and the ministration of the word. His heart seems detained from them; and he cannot approach them with complacency, or, at best, seeks not in them the end of their destination and use—improvement and growth in grace. He is a secret enemy to such employments; wishes he might be excused; and will have as little of them as possible. He hath a very ready choice of all such means as may lead him to his favourite gratifications in life: but as to these means of grace, having no heart to God, and to obedience to his will, he doth not like them. Whereas the new creature chooses these needful means, both that he may meet God in them, and exercise and strengthen his soul in grace, by the use of them. He is determined upon them, and will have as much of them as he can. He will be in them, though the flesh be ever so unready; and industriously doth he chide and rouse his sluggish affections. Willing to be set free from the bondage of corruption, he cries, "Ah, my God! that I were fashioned after thy likeness; that thy will were perfectly stamped upon my soul; that no remaining adversary might oppose thee in my heart; that the constant, universal submission of all that is within me, were yielded unto thee! Then should I be

free indeed! And this freedom thou kindly offerest me by Jesus Christ: Lord, I will wait upon thee, and entreat thee for it day and night; yea, I will seek thee, in whatever place or manner thou hast appointed. Yes, my soul, we will not be tired of the gracious work; we will use an holy importunity, we will be where the dew of heaven falleth."

This may serve to show, in what manner the new creature chooses and determines: nor shall I need add any more upon this head, when I have observed, that his choice is in due conformity with the apprehensions he hath conceived of God and himself. And how reasonable and consistent these are, hath been already seen.

3. I go on to the affections. And here perhaps it will not be amiss, to let you see previously what is meant by them, and what is their office and use: a piece of knowledge, indeed, of no necessity to salvation; but which may help us to form a juster notion of the new creature, in this third power of the soul. Now the affections are those sensible stirrings and motions, which with greater or less activity rise up in us, concerning every thing which is the object of our thoughts. These are constantly at work; though when they act but in the ordinary measure, we are not apt to remark and feel them. And, as hath been said before, their office is to put the soul upon action. An example shall show you the nature and several kinds of these servants to the higher faculties. Fix your attention for a moment upon a large estate, which would supply you with all the necessaries and elegancies of life; whereon you

might enjoy yourself at full ease, not wanting the least pleasure to which you might be inclined; be out of the reach of fortune, and above dependence; have it in your power to oblige your friends, and to keep as many of them as you would about you. Observe now: do you find that you are approving, and do esteem, with pleasure and satisfaction, such a possession, wishing it were yours? This emotion you feel in you towards it, is the affection called love. Approving such an estate, have you a certain confidence that you may obtain it? The brisk motion you feel in you, is termed hope. Suppose yourself possessed of it, and that you find yourself lifted up with much satisfaction in your new circumstance; this is the affection joy. Imagine yourself so possessed and happy; and think if this estate should be taken from you; the displeasure you feel at the thought is called hatred. But suppose yourself in danger of losing it; the disturbance you experience within you is fear. Suppose it actually taken from you; the agitation you feel is sorrow. Let us place the presence and favour of God in the stead of this estate. Suppose God offering his presence and favour to you. Do you hear the offer with pleasure? This is love. Do you find yourself in a way of enjoying this offer? You feel the stirrings of hope. Are you possessed of God's presence and favour? Your affection is joy. Think of being deprived of God's presence and favour: you feel hatred. Suppose yourself in danger of losing it: it is fear that works in your breast. Have you lost it for the present? It is sorrow that moves

you. This may serve to show you, what the affections are. And while I have been explaining them, I have, from the two examples produced, taken a way for evidencing the difference between the natural and renewed affections. For he who shall find himself affected with love and hatred, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, about an earthly estate, while he finds no such workings of his affections about God, is certainly an unrenewed man. While, on the other hand, he who sits comparatively easy about earthly things, and finds the love and hatred, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, of his mind, mainly exercised concerning God, may have good confidence, if his understanding and will are renewed, that so also are his affections.

But each of these will require a farther illustration. It must be our present business to set forth, in what manner the love and hatred, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, of the new creature are employed.

In illustrating these, attention must be had to the careless and the formal. But how can I make a difference between these two, in a matter wherein they are so evidently, and exactly alike? In appearance they vary, but in affection they are the same. The careless evidently loves and hates, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, after a carnal manner: and truly, the formalist does no other. I must be content therefore to put them together in this inquiry: but this shall be attempted in such a manner, as may serve principally to undeceive the formal professor, and to make it plain to him, how, notwithstanding his decency and regularity, he not only

comes short of, but stands opposed to the new creature, in the employment of his affections.

1. Love is the ruling affection of the mind of man, leading all the other affections after it. And this is employed about different things in the new, and unrenewed mind.

The sinner, insensible to love towards God, lays out the first esteem of his heart upon the gratification of worldly interest, honour and credit, the indulgences of ease and pleasure. "I must be about my interest: My business," says he, "must needs increase my substance. It were good to be something higher in life, to equal those who are now above me, and who, through the influence which wealth and station give, now keep me under a disagreeable constraint and subjection. It were good to be one's own master, to be beholden to none, and to carry a little sway in the world. Grievous it is, to be contradicted, and controlled, and trampled upon. I am enslaved by my present narrowness. I would be set at large, that I might enjoy the world, and taste the pleasures of life; that I might share in those agreeable gratifications and amusements, which render us happy." I will answer thee, thou thing of vanity! What! are these the best things thou longest for? Canst thou conceive no higher pleasures, than earthly interest, honour and ease, can bring thee? Is God so very cheap with thee, that thou findest no eager wish arise, no pleasing satisfaction glowing within thy heart, in the proposed enjoyment of him, while thy trifling heart is ready almost to burst in the expectation of carnal pleasure and worldly dignities?

Mean man! Hear and see the more noble aims of the renewed soul, and be taught thy folly and thy sin! Hear, and be ashamed at thy baseness, while I tell thee, that God, the ever-blessed, and Jesus, the prince of peace, the Holy Spirit, and even all mankind, are the objects of the new creature's esteem and love.

(1.) God alone is his possession; esteem of other things is comparatively worn out with the new creature. In God, he sees all that can engage his heart, all that is worthy and excellent, lovely and desirable. He will not condescend to value those dazzling delights, which thousands and ten thousands so warmly pursue on every side of him; like a man of another nation, unconcerned about or disrelishing the pleasures of the natives; like a man beholding the play of children. But in God he hath found a perfect source of blessedness; here he rests his foot, while he sends up continually the warmest desires of his soul: "O manifest thyself unto me, thou God of my life; lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, and I shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness! With thee is the well of life; from thee, rivers of pleasure flow: let me drink hereof, and I cannot thirst. When wilt thou come unto me? When shall I appear before thy presence, wherein true joy is only to be found? O thou best and only good, nothing but thee can I desire; thee alone can I love! Ah, how cold my sluggish heart, that I can love thee no more!"

(2.) Christ again is the object of the new creature's love. The natural man looks upon the fair-

est among ten thousand, with an unrelenting insensibility; a stupid ingratitude possesses his soul towards the Lamb given to the slaughter for sinners; while the idols of life, pleasure, or interest, or human glory, shall swell his unworthy soul with tides of joy. But the new creature is the spouse of Christ, hath given the whole heart to him. No other object draws out his soul, as the lovely Jesus doth; in the sight of whom, in his most free humiliations, most perfect purity, and most glorious triumphs, esteem, tenderness, and gratitude, rise up in an holy flame; while he secretly grieves, that it burns no higher; that the love of Christ constraining him, he should be so cold and lifeless. But cold as he complains his love is towards his Lord, if he set the love of father, or child, or friend, or of the dearest thing in life against it, it weighs nothing in the balance.

(3.) And so also, while the natural man hath hardly heard, or done no more than heard, that there is any Holy Ghost, the renewed man is not without grateful affection towards the sanctifier and comforter of his soul. He hath much to tell you of the gracious dealings of the Spirit with him. "I was far off," he will be saying, "and he brought me nigh. Often I refused to hear, but he forsook me not; I grieved him, yet still he returned unto me again. He convinced me of my danger, he showed me the terrors which lay before me, he kindly importuned me to flee from the path of destruction, he led me into the arms of Christ; he converted my soul, he opened mine eyes to behold the joys of heaven; he

made me to taste of his consolations, that I should not faint in my passage through this vale of misery. And what shall I render unto him? Dead in trespasses and sins as I once was, but now alive from the dead, what shall I render unto him by whom I live? I can give him nothing which is not his own. All that I have is his gift. Yea, if I pay him the intensest love of my whole soul, even this love he inspires me with. Yet I will acknowledge him the author of that life which is in my soul; that by his influence I am revived, and that by his power and might I trust I shall be meet to stand before God for ever."

(4.) The tenderness which he experiences towards men, is another exercise of the renewed heart. Doth a man find himself unconcerned about the souls of others, unacquainted with sentiments of compassion towards men, because they are sinners? Is he insensible of secret pleasure in the good; forced to approve them by the voice of conscience, yet neither esteeming nor liking them? This man is surely of the old leaven. The new creature finds his heart open to take in the whole world; knows a pity for sinners at the most distant parts of the earth, nor is there an haughty insulter or enemy, who hath not a place in his generous breast. But with those who bear the marks of God's children upon them, he would dwell; a peculiar tenderness of esteem and love rises within him upon the sight of these. Be they high or low, rich or poor, ignorant or learned, have they been enemies, or do they differ in opinion; still the gracious heart takes them in, and yields them the first share of his affection.

Such is the employment of the new creature's love. You see the tendency of it, and by this tendency you must judge, that the leading affection love hath the right use and employment given it, rather than by any degree of vehemence, be it more or less, wherewith it is excited. I called love the leading affection, because it gives directions to all the rest. Wherefore, where love is renewed, there

2. Hatred will be new also. To hate what one ought to love, and to love what should be disliked, this is the way of the carnal mind. Let formality say what it will, yet it is inwardly displeased with the strictness of the gospel, and with a constant attendance upon the means of grace; is uneasy when detained by serious conversation, especially if it be free and particular; cannot endure advice or reproof, and takes it up as a task to read the word of God; above all, abhors and kicks against that public ministry which searches and lays bare the heart, nor will suffer men to pass for Christians, because of outsides and parties. Just the reverse the new creature, whose aversion is altogether the contrary way. While godliness and the means of grace, serious company, and Christian freedom, the word of God and an awakening ministration of it, are his delight, he finds a deep displeasure rise within him against sin, and every way thereof; against the corruption of his nature, and the residue of lust which abides within him; against sin in others, and the company of sinners; against all that looks like sin, and all the temptations that lead to it; and especially against that leading corruption of his heart, which hath often

subdued, and still besieges him. "Away from me, ye abominable ways," he says, "I can no more endure you; I am ashamed, yea even confounded, whilst I remember what a beast ye have made me: how ye have defiled my soul; how ye have dishonoured my God, and opposed the kingdom of my Master, the Lord Jesus, through me. Away, ye seducing works of wickedness; all that is within me rises against you with abhorrence. My God hates you. My Lord ye have crucified, ye deceivers. Yea, ye have caused me to add affliction to his grief and sufferings. For the sake of the forgiving Father, and of the dying Redeemer; for the sake of my soul escaped out of your hands, I loathe and detest you, ye paths of ungodliness; ye ways of vanity and pride; ye baneful pleasures; ye perpetual, but most stupifying amusements, little lurking betrayers that I did not suspect; who could look innocent and smile, while ye were working my ruin; but chiefly thou, the master sin and tyrant, to whom I walked in detestable subjection. O my God, all these, thine and "mine enemies which would not that thou should reign over me, bring them out, and slay them before thee."

3. The *new creature* also hopes and fears differently from the natural man; nor doth the most regular outside enter into the feelings of this kind which he experiences. This difference will more evidently be seen, and what the hopes and fears of the renewed mind are, be discovered, while these two affections are considered together. See now the most convincing opposition between an unreformed and a reformed mind. Tell me what is your

biggest hope? that is, what do you wait for, with the most pleasing expectation of enjoying it? What engages your first and most constant wishes? Is it indulgence of any kind? If it be not this, is it more of the world than you now possess? or is it an enlargement of your station? Or if not any of these, is it the favour or acceptance of men, or the esteem of some peculiar person, whose affection and friendship you would engage? If not this, is it yet the happiness of your family, the prosperity of your children? In a word, is your first wish after any earthly thing? However allowable such hope might be otherwise, still if it be your first hope, your prevailing expectation, your soul is unrenewed; you seek not first, it is plain, the kingdom of God. On the other side, what is it you mostly fear? Is it chiefly the injury of your fortune, or the being prevented in the increase of it? Is it pain, or sickness, or death; the death of others, or of yourself? Is it, in short, the danger of any present evil that most alarms you? Nothing is plainer, than that your heart is set upon that, concerning the loss of which you find the most lively apprehensions. If your hopes and fears are principally taken up about the matters of this life, incontestably you are a child of this world; and common sense will tell you, that you cannot be that new creature, which looketh for the inheritance of the saints in light.

The man created anew, hopes and fears after another sort. Eternity, the enjoyment of God and Christ for ever, the attainment of perfect holiness, have so engaged his first and largest hopes, that he

remains insensible, in a way, to all lower expectations. The voice of hope cries in him, "O eternity, inconceivable space of being, without end, where time shall be no more; where God, the fountain of life and love, shall be enjoyed with the fullest freedom, shall be manifested to the creature in ceaseless and ravishing communications; where defiled nature shall damp and clog no more, but the soul, wholly freed from the hinderances of sin and the flesh, righteous, perfect, and stamped with every impression of the divine perfections, shall eternally behold God's face, and lie open to the reviving influences of the divinity, everlastingly shed upon it. Glorious state of purity and happiness, what is all beneath the sun when compared with it? Lord, lead me to this thy kingdom, offered to the miserable sons and daughters of men; lead me to it, by the way of thine appointment, Jesus Christ, to whom I have betrothed my soul! Encouraged by thy manifold goodness, I will confidently hope, that through him this reward shall be mine. Upon this hope, let me ride it out against the various storms of this dangerous time. Set heaven as a light continually before me, that, having it always in mine eye, I may be walking directly towards it; and as I draw nearer to it, may behold it with clearer view, and be revived by the cheering influences it sheds upon me! Thus the *new creature* hopes; and his fears also are of a peculiar kind. His soul takes the alarm if he have made the least step towards hindering his salvation: yea, if he doth but suspect that he is out of the way of it, he grows afraid. He fears lest the enemies of his soul should

take advantage of him. He fears especially lest he should dishonour God, hinder the advancement of Christ's kingdom, or give offence to the weak. He fears giving others pain or grief. He fears using the extent of allowed freedom, that he may not damage himself or his neighbour. To be short, his fears concern God's kingdom, the state of his own soul, and that of others. Here they are quick and lively, and such as he feels not upon any worldly occasion or circumstance.

Judge now if there be not a wide difference, let formality say of it what it will, between *one* whose hopes and fears are lively and awakened about present things, but cold and momentary about things eternal; and *another*, whose tenderest feelings of hope and fear arise from the things unseen, with a comparative insensibility to the things which now are; who is, on one hand, supported in all the occurrences of life by the hope set before him, and on the other, walks on cautiously and with a jealous fear, lest in any matter he should dishonour his God, or injure his brother, or endanger his own soul.

4. Joy and sorrow are the concluding affections. And here, who knows not, that if our joys and sorrows are worldly, our hearts are so too? If a man's joys arise from his wealth, or strength, or beauty; from pleasure and indulgence; from friendships, knowledge, and reputation; and his sorrows, from the want or loss of any of these: if, at the same time, joy and grief lie stupid and motionless in the concerns of a spiritual nature, we cannot be at a loss to see that he is no *new creature*. The *new crea-*

ture rejoices and sorrows after a godly manner. Walking under the comfortable communication of the divine presence, he rejoices: but doth God hide the light of his countenance from him, he mourns with a disconsolate grief. He rejoices in the fitness, sufficiency, and willingness of the Redeemer, to supply all his present and eternal wants. He sorrows in the deplorable views he hath of his Master's kingdom trod under foot, of the blood and the grace of Christ vilely cast away on obstinate and impenitent sinners. He reviews the mighty work of conversion and sanctification wrought upon him, and rejoices with all grateful joy. He turns back upon his past iniquities; he turns in upon his remaining corruption, and mourns. There is a peculiarity in his joys and sorrows; they are his alone, a stranger meddleth not with them: while, withal, they are joys of the highest taste, and sorrows which have no equal. It will be needless to illustrate them largely, seeing they have been in good measure spoken of before under love, the ruling affection. For spiritual joy and grief are but the pleasure or pain which the renewed mind feels in the present enjoyment or disappointment of those things which are the objects of its love.

Let this suffice, then, to give you some just notion of the manner in which the affections of the new creature are employed, which finishes what was first proposed concerning the inward part of the *new creature.* And of this we may truly say, after such a review, " old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

And upon the whole of it, is there is not a most evident opposition between this character and that of a careless sinner? Is it not, withal, so strongly distinguished from formality, that a man must wink hard not to observe it? But is not this also a most important and universal concern, in as much as our union with Christ, and consequently our title to his salvation, stands or falls by this very thing? Have you heard all these things, therefore, with self-application? And, coming to some general conclusion, on which part do you find yourself? If on that of the world, the old Adam still, shall I need say, "it is high time to awake out of sleep?" This would be but to repeat the calls you have found your conscience already making upon you.

Or hath any among you not understood these things? Have I seemed to any as one proposing mysterious riddles? Their very ignorance must condemn them. They are without spiritual discernment; "they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." For, surely, I have spoken nothing but the words of truth and soberness.

But, however, renewed or otherwise, these discourses may hitherto have found us, let us with one heart beseech God, that he will give us all an understanding to know, and a will to choose, both him and his way of peace; and that he will so graciously dispose our love and hatred, our hope and fear, our joys and sorrows, that, quickened in the whole inward man, we may faithfully seek him here, and finally and eternally enjoy him hereafter, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Such is the power of the grace of Christ, such is the mighty influence which goes out from him to heal the soul, that whoever is vitally united to him, is thereby recovered from death and darkness, to light and life. The mist which lay over him is removed, and he has an unseen world, and an invisible God, in full view before him. Directed by the glorious prospects which he beholds, he apprehends not in the manner that others do; he can no more take up his rest in the unsatisfying and perishing joys of time; he disdains such little things as earthly honour, human respect, and filthy lucre; he is grown ambitious of greater things, and will be content with nothing short of honour in the court above, with nothing less than the love and favour of God, with nought beneath an inheritance eternal in the heavens: yea, should he be offered even these, the very place of archangels, for ten millions of ages, he would be dissatisfied; must have heaven for ever, or all is

nothing. It is God who is the sole, the supreme object of his choice and love: God propitious to sinners in his Son Jesus, and Jesus saving and quickening the dead in trespasses and sins by the operation of the Spirit. For God he hopes, he thirsts for the living God; he waits for that gracious day, when, being thoroughly fit for God, God shall be his portion for ever. Here his heart is fixed; and he cannot endure whatever would prevent the blessed possession; fearful, lest anyhow he should come short of it, and filled with disconsolate grief, if at any time he lose sight of it. Such are the wonders of divine grace, and such the might of Christ to new-form the spirits of men.

The proposed method leads me now to describe the expression or exercises of the renewed mind. We have seen the inward parts of the new creature, have been exploring the nobler half of us,—that half which, it is to be feared, is but little known or inquired into. How the new creature apprehends, and chooses, and is affected, hath been discovered. And where the root, the principle, is reformed and holy, the branches sent forth will also be sanctified. External sanctity is but a pretended show, or a fond mistake, while the heart remains defiled: but where this hath put on the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy influence will shed itself through the whole man, and every thought, word, and action, will speak the inward change.

These, the thoughts, words, and actions, do include the whole conduct; there being no other expressions of the mind, but these. Accordingly, our

remaining labour is, to illustrate the new creature's character in this way of thinking, speaking, and acting. Nor shall it be found, upon inquiry, that he hath less peculiarity of conduct, than he hath been seen to have of sentiment. His manner is entirely his own; not in the least thing, neither thought, word, or most insignificant action, is any other like him. As a child of God, as an heir and expectant of heaven, he lives in a singular way among the sons of men; distinguished from them, and utterly unlike to them. As a prince, royally descended, and trained up for a throne, all his behaviour bespeaks the dignity of his birth, and the greatness of his inheritance. Pretenders may mimic his garb, and affect his manner; in his absence may pass for him with the vulgar: but no sooner doth he appear, than he is known and distinguished from never so many, who presume, without title, to be of equal birth with him. He thinks, he speaks, he acts, like the son of the king of heaven.

1. With regard to his thoughts. Now thoughts are to God the same thing which words and actions (which are but the interpreters of the thoughts) are unto men. For God knoweth the thoughts of men; all within us is naked and open to his eye. And therefore a good man labours to approve himself in God's sight by the purity of his thoughts, as well as by the integrity of his words and actions. And, indeed, by an holy discipline herein, he hath the best grounds to be confident of his sincerity towards God; and doth more evidence to himself the simplicity of his heart, than by any other way whatever. For

which reason, I shall beg your special attention to this matter of the thoughts; as being least liable to leave us mistaken in the judgment we make of ourselves. Words and actions, although they will regularly follow, where the heart is rightly disposed; yet are not so distinguishingly to us proofs of a renewed mind, as well regulated thoughts: seeing both a purity of word and action can avail nothing towards the new creature, where the thoughts of the heart are defiled; and also, that words and actions, however pure in themselves, may spring from undue principles within. But when the heart is clean in the thoughts thereof, what passes within us being a matter merely between God and ourselves, there can be no room left of doubt. So that the course and conduct of our thoughts, demands a very peculiar place in our inquiry after the new creature. And under these particulars I would give you a notion of his way of thinking.—He hath a serious turn of thinking upon whatever passes through his mind;—he hath an aptness to fall into holy meditation;—he doth not entertain defiling thoughts in his heart.

(1.) He hath a serious turn of thinking upon whatever passes through his mind. I speak not of the matter of his thoughts, what he thinks about; but of his manner of thinking. The matter of his thoughts may and must be often about the things of this life, and such as are common; but his manner of thinking about such ordinary and needful things is sanctified. He thinks in such a way as this.—When he reflects upon the house that covers him, the bed that refreshes him, the raiment that clothes

him, the food that nourishes him, the friends that cheer him, his thought upon one and another of these is: "They are thy comforts, thy bounties, O God; the present tokens of thy love, the pledge of thy tenderness towards us." When he reflects upon his success or disappointment in his business, "*This* is God's doing," he aptly suggests to himself, "and must be patiently submitted to: *that* is his gift, which must be received with thankfulness, and used with religious care." When he enters into company he is ready to reflect, "What temptations shall I have here to encounter? what opportunities of usefulness?" When he retires from company, "How have I acted my part? Honourably to God, profitably to my neighbour, and innocently, if not beneficially, to myself?" When he meets a sinner, "What a dishonour to God, what an object of compassion is here! Ah! that it would please God to open thine eyes!" And when a good man comes in his way, "This is the servant of the high God; I would dwell with him; I would be such as he is;" is his secret reflection. When he hears of the death of others, "Art thou ready my soul? We must away." When he hears of the afflictions and troubles of others, "Turn them, O God, to their spiritual improvement!" When of greater calamities, "Now that thy judgments are in the earth, may the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness! When of the sad wickedness of the times; the blasphemy, infidelity, corruption, lewdness, drunkenness, which abound; "Woe is me for thy dishonour, O Lord! Turn thou us, and we shall

be turned!" Let this serve to show you his manner, how the new nature doth spiritualize his way of thinking about all the things which pass under his notice.

But doth the seeming Christian think thus? Hath he a secret principle within him, which suggests to him this manner of thinking? Is he apt to think of the sinner with compassion, and of the good with delight? Of worldly prosperity with fear; and of crosses, great or little, with submissiveness? Have the objects which present themselves to him a serious turn of thought upon his mind, as he reflects upon them? Doth he think as a stranger upon earth; and doth heaven sway, and rule his thoughts, as home doth those of a man upon a journey? The formal person, as soon as he hath done with the task of devotion, thinks just as other men do, without seriousness, in a vain, selfish, earthly manner: neither the glory of God, nor self-denial and deadness to the world, nor heavenly mindedness, nor humiliation, have entered into his manner of thinking. And although he often thinks about what is good, yet never doth he think of it as he should, humbly and charitably. So great a difference is there between him and the new creature, that while the new creature thinks of the most indifferent things religiously, he thinks of the most religious thing in a manner unsanctified and perverse.

And what shall I say of the careless sinner?—Are not the thoughts of his heart manifest? Dost thou not think like a child of the earth, nothing in thy manner testifying an higher original? Are not

thy thoughts in such a way as this? "This will bring me profit, and that preferment and honour; this will hurt my interest, and that will cross my schemes; this will gratify me, furnish my table, my house, that will enlarge my influence, and increase the number of my dependants; this man will be an hinderance to me, that man may do me service, and I must make him my friend." Dost thou not think upon every thing with worldly views and principles? And when a thought of God, death, or eternity, forces itself upon thee, it is not thy manner to receive it with dissatisfaction, and to forget it with all indifference? To show thee thy way of thinking in its true light: a good man thou approvest, yet canst not think of him but with displeasure; an ill man thou condemnest, and yet thy thoughts are those of peace, nearness, and reconciliation towards him; upon the sight of the former, thy heart crieth out within thee, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? upon that of the latter, "Come with me, cast in thy lot, let us have one purse."

(2.) The new creature hath an aptness to fall into holy meditation. Let this be instanced in seasons of leisure and retirement. A man freed from the weight of business and the engagement of company, who can be without serious reflection in one kind or other, can have little room to judge that God hath the first regard of his soul. And yet there is a generation, which is not apt to take up the thought of God and religion, upon such most seasonable occasions: ungodly men, who, as David speaks, "have not God in all their thoughts." They

shall be alone, on a journey, rise up and lie down; and all the thoughts of their hearts vain and worldly. As I may say, they do not all the while once think of thinking upon God. And what will ye judge of yourselves? Are ye not carnal? Are ye not careless? Will ye yet doubt of the unholy state of your souls, when ye will not so much as think of your heavenly Father, and the heavenly inheritance he offers you, even when ye have nothing else to think of?

But the new creature, as he is apt to steal a thought for a moment out of business or company, and to retire to God in the midst of either; so he makes much of seasons, when he is in retirement. Now he finds himself free and at ease, free now for converse with his God, and to commune with his soul. Now he falls into serious meditation; either searches out his spirit and his conduct, or raises his thoughts after God, or stretches them forward into eternity, or deliberates for the glory of his Master's kingdom. Some solemn subject engages him: and though he be beaten from it by the interruption of trifling conceits, which the weakness and vanity of the human mind is ever liable to; yet he will be returning to it again and again. The cxxxixth Psalm affords us an admirable example of a good man's secret and holy meditation. It contains some pious reflections of David upon God's universal presence. He was sunk into the most solemn recollection upon the thought of God's nearness unto him. He was considering how God searched him, and saw him throughout: he found he could go nowhere from

God in the whole universe. There God would be also, wherever he was. The awful pleasing thought grows warm upon his soul, till he feels himself beset on every side, and (if I may so express it) unable to escape from God's presence. He breaks out into this most pious and most suitable ejaculation: "Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts; look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Will formality say, that it hath this aptness to serious meditation? How was the last hour of leisure employed? What matter was the subject of it? Retired from the world, did thy thoughts fly upwards? Didst thou find thyself drawn towards God and Christ; that thou wast inclined to sacred reflection; the tendency of thy soul, as if it had been influenced by an attractive principle, directing thy thoughts towards the point of seriousness? Or wast thou not at that time engaged upon some important scheme of interest or honour? upon some trifle lately enjoyed, or of which thou wast in expectation? Was it thus that hour was spent? And are thy retired (I mean not thy devotional) hours like unto it? Surely thou thinkest as the careless doth; thou art a stranger to the pious spirit which possesses the new creature's breast.—Yet again,

(3.) The new creature doth not entertain defiling thoughts in his heart. Proud, uncharitable, worldly, lustful suggestions, may be starting up in the mind; although less and less, more seldom and more faintly, as we advance toward perfection. But the inquiry

is, What entertainment they meet with? Are they not suddenly observed and speedily cast out? Doth the mind dwell upon them, raising contrivances to put them in execution? Above all, is there little else which passes through the mind, insomuch that the soul feeds upon them continually? God, who trieth the heart and reins, sees nothing but filthiness and defilement abiding with such. What matter forms, if this be the case? Or where can be the difference between the decent, or the open careless sinner? God requireth "truth in the inward parts;" and, behold "an heart unwashed from wickedness, nothing but vain thoughts lodge there."

But the thoughts of the righteous are right; he suppresses all sinful imaginations; he will not entertain such disagreeable guests. It grieves him, that impurities should be pressing into the temple of God. But he harbours them not, would not show them the least courtesy, not knowingly doth he give them the least consent. Do they return again and again? He still refuses them, still casts them out, ashamed that he is so little master of his own heart. He doth not sit down and feed his mind with pompous reviews of the honour, wealth, or fame, that distinguish him in his generation, nor amuse and lose himself in imaginary distant scenes of worldly blessings, or carnal pleasures, which are but in expectation. He keeps his thoughts close as he can to present duty and the occurrences of the instant day, leaving the morrow to God, the disposer of it, the dispenser of all its events. He takes no thought for the morrow, in the largest sense the

words can bear; finding, that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." In a word, he is such an enemy to sin, that he cannot patiently endure it in the most secret thoughts of his heart. There is a spring upon his soul, which perpetually and forcibly acts against all vain imaginations; though, nevertheless, he is not without suspicions, that he may often give them some unobserved consent. He knows that he hath no "lie in his right hand," when, in the sacred words of inspiration, he makes his most devout and importunate petition to the Father of heaven: "Renew a right spirit within me; try my heart and my reins; cleanse me from secret faults; let the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my Redeemer. O mention me in the book of remembrance which is written before thee, for them which fear the Lord, and have thought upon his name."

To state the whole of this matter in the shortest compass.—It is the way of a natural man to think unseriously even of the most serious things: of a renewed man, to sanctify the most ordinary occurrences, in his manner of thinking of them. It is the way of the unhumbled mind, to be inapt to holy meditation in the hours of leisure and retirement; the thoughts of the new creature, upon such occasions, settle easily upon spiritual and heavenly things. It is an evidence of an unchanged heart, that evil thoughts do dwell upon, and possess themselves of the mind: it is the proof of a new spirit, that such suggestions are quickly seen, stoutly resisted, and suddenly rejected, and that there is a certain longing

and labouring of soul to possess a greater mastery over, and freedom from them.

2. From thoughts I pass on to words, the most ready expression of the thoughts of the heart, and evident tokens of the frame and temper of soul which abides within: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," whether it be good or ill. From hence it must follow, as an undeniable consequence, that where the heart is renewed, the speech will be seasoned; although a savouriness in speech doth not always prove a wholesomeness and soundness of heart; seeing good breeding, formality, or hypocrisy, shall be found to make the mouth clean, when the heart is all rotten and defiled. But these are points unquestionably certain, that where the speech is naught, the heart is so too; and that when the heart is changed, there will be an holy and advised use of the tongue.

"By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Hear therefore and understand: for out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee, thou wanton sinner, thou too easy formalist.

Your tongue is licentious, it runs at random. I charge you not with lewdness, or profaneness, or incivility, or falsity, in your speech: but you have no bridle upon your tongue; there is no holy constraint upon you; your tongue goeth through the world at large, regardless of the unprofitableness and vanity there is in your talk, of the unmeaning damage you may do your neighbour, or the dishonour you may bring upon God. You say, "with our tongues we

will speak; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" But you want that purpose of heart, that your mouth shall not transgress; so that you talk inconsiderately, and your tongue, void of all reverent fear, wantons with an unadvised rashness upon every matter whereof you speak. Your heart light, and your tongue let loose, you say what you will, without farther reflection.

Not so the renewed person. He not only says, I will, but actually does, take heed to his ways, that he offend not in his tongue. His "tongue is kept as with a bridle; he marks what he says; dares not speak what he thinks not, or does not judge meet to be spoken; is upon his guard that he do not drop an idle or a rash word: if he do, it is observed and condemned. His tongue is brought under a law. He keepeth his mouth: "doth not answer before he heareth; doth not foolishly utter all his mind, but keepeth it in till afterwards." He hath found that in many words are divers vanities; wherefore he walks after Solomon's counsel; he spareth his words; they are gracious, and they are few.

See what a difference there is between the manner of the one and the other: just as wide as between unadvisedness and caution, licentiousness and godly fear. If your tongue be under no rule, and at least none but that of decency and civility, and you know not to hold it in awe for God, heaven, and your soul's sake, it is a shrewd argument of an unbroken heart. But if your tongue be under a sacred subjection; if you bridle, confine, and keep a strait hand upon it, it is a good and continual proof

of a converted heart. So the wise man determineth: "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer;" it is with consultation and regard that a good man speaks: "but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things;" rashness and vanity pour out of his mouth, without thought and without end.

Again, if your heart be unchanged, you will be using your tongue as convenience serves. When a man's tongue turns about with every company, and is ready for every purpose; when it is made the servant of all occasions, is prostituted to the views of interest, reputation or lust; and speaks not what conscience, but what present convenience dictates; when it can be smooth and flatter with the great, hath a sober word among the serious, nor stands out for a lewd jest, (decently wrapt up, it may be,) if it be the humour; surely "there is no faithfulness in such a mouth, and the inward parts must be very wickedness."

But now, the "good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things. His speech is always with grace, seasoned with salt. He speaketh the truth from his heart:" this is his main care; not lying for God, nor to serve any present turn. And then his tongue is his instrument, whereby to glorify God, and to profit his neighbour. He labours, that his words be weighty, serious, edifying, courteous. Hear the furniture of his mouth, how full of grace his lips are! He hath a word for God, and a word for souls; a word for the righteous, and a word for the wicked; a word for comfort, and a word for reproof; a word for peace, and a word for

charity; a word for the absent, and a word for the slanderer; a word for the oppressed, and a word for the oppressor: all which words he brings forth as need is, and uses with sincerity and resolution, quickening as goads, and close "as nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies." Not studying to please, so much as to benefit those with whom he converses.

Say, thou man of double tongue, whose mouth easily accommodates itself to every worldly respect, turning round with thy interests and the countenances of others, how doth he stand in wide opposition to thee? He would approve himself to God, thou to men; he speaks not, as thou dost, for his own ends, but to edification; his communicative member is employed soberly, not vainly; faithfully, not deceitfully; meekly, not haughtily; kindly, not roughly; lovingly, not cruelly and unfeelingly to others.—Look well to this, I entreat you. It is a great matter, and a notable fruit of the renewed mind. For St. James saith, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." None is a new creature whose tongue is not under this discipline: but where the new creature is within, all this will be familiar and genuine.

Once more, if you are the new creature, you will take the name of God into your mouth with an awful and religious reverence.—Alas! for the insolent wretches, who can trifle with the glorious and fearful name, The Lord our God! Whether shall we more lament the dishonour ye do to our God, or the ruin which is fallen upon your impenitent heads? Ye

sport of Satan! Ye engines which he raises up against God to defy him to his face! Whether ye be they who bellow out mad cursings, and call down God to see your falsehoods, anger, revenge, and vain humours: or whether they who reverence not the oaths ye take; either knowing that ye swear falsely, or not carefully performing the obligations ye have thus solemnly bound upon you: one and the other, how far must ye needs be from God, who can treat him in this manner without trembling! And ye too, who can approach this house of worship, and speak to God with a most affronting indifference, as if he were not worth the regarding; or with an affected devotion, as if he could be pleased with compliments. Merciful God! how much farther wilt thou suffer us to go? Nothing but thine own infinite patience could possibly endure under such insolence!—These are the provokings of the natural man.

The new creature, on the contrary, treats the very name of God with respect; doth not slightly introduce it into his ordinary conversation, as the manner of some is: nor lightly worship him with a cold and wandering heart. He would not speak of God without need; and when he speaks of him, it is with all reverent regard. He doth not babble, he neither knows nor conceives what when he prays: he worships, as he can, "in spirit and in truth." He is not rash with his mouth; he is not hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and he upon earth.

Remark it well: You shall find this reverent re-

gard of God's name no small mark of difference between a good and ill heart. When the soul is possessed with any becoming impressions of the divine Majesty and presence, the tongue is holden with an awful restraint, nor can any longer trifle with serious things: the whole man bows before God, and the mouth humbly confesses the difference which the soul feels to be between the infinite God and sinful dust and ashes. When a man is brought into the presence, however slightly he might have treated majesty before, it now strikes and awes him; nor does he dare speak, but respectfully and reverently. But the sinner speaks of and to God without fear, because he is not introduced,—because his soul knows not what it is to stand before the presence of the Almighty.

Cast back your eye now, and review the ground we have passed. Consider the peculiar character of the *new creature:* how greatly he thinks; how exaltedly he speaks. Do you not approve him, however unlike him you are; wish that even thus you thought and spake; yea, envy him that he stands in a light so much above you? A Christian indeed is a man, a reasonable creature; a light, which draws the eye, and engages the heart; whose property it is to make manifest and reprove the works of darkness. Go, ye children of the night, and lament your stupidity, that ye are thus far from that conduct which ye dare not condemn; go and learn, that amidst all the ease, wealth, and security of the world, the meanest Christian is one incomparably beyond you in every thing truly valuable; and remember,

that while your hopes shall assuredly perish, his shall remain throughout all generations.

But I leave this with you for the present. The solemn transaction before us demands our attention.*

I must hope, that all of you who are drawing near to remember Jesus Christ, and to partake of the pledges of his love, in the ordinance now before us, have in general been able to make application to yourselves of the Christian's character, as far as you have heard it described hitherto: at least, that ye have clearly seen that the description of the natural man, whether careless or formal, doth not suit you; and that ye evidently find in yourselves a sincere desire, and an earnest purpose of heart, to reach after that which ye are apt to think ye have not yet attained of the new creature. If any one discovers a point of holiness before him which he hath not reached, and yet doth not experience any strong desire to come up to it, he wants one of the main feelings of a renewed mind, "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," and does not belong to Christ. Such a one, in the use of the communion, is likely to do nothing more than blind his eyes and harden his heart. Supposing, therefore, that such as are determined for the feast are in general partakers of the new nature, and seeking growth and improvement in this wonderful change that hath been wrought upon them, I may suitably suggest to them,

* This Sermon was preached before the dispensation of the Lord's Supper.

1. The fitness of all thankful acknowledgment to their Head, as the author of this their new birth. Ye were naturally dead in trespasses and sins; had not the least spark belonging to you of those gracious dispositions, which now adorn your souls, and cause you to lift up your heads with hope. That you are now alive from the dead is, because Christ liveth in you: for God hath quickened you through him. This ye have received out of his fulness. Go then, and present unto him your grateful praises, in the way he hath appointed you. Go with most humble thanksgivings, with sentiments of acknowledgment, which labour to be proportionate to the vastness of the blessing he hath bestowed upon you, in visiting you in your low state, and turning you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Cold we shall be in the remembrance of our Master's death, if there be not some hope of an interest in the merits of it. But if our hope is grown up to confidence in him, because he hath created us again, and we have found ourselves *new creatures;* then our acts of praise will not fail of being hearty before him, and full of the most determined protestations of duty and service to the Lord our Redeemer. And hereupon I shall remind you,

2. That if you are the new creature, Christ is yours, and the promises yours: so that, upon this ground, you may surely apply Christ to yourself in this sacramental seal. For hereby Christ is actually sealed, in all the scope of his benefits, to those who are his; that is, to those whom his Spirit hath already transformed by the renewal of their hearts and

lives. To them the elements of bread and wine, as instituted signs and seals of the new covenant, are, sacramentally, the body and blood of Christ, according to his words of institution, "This is my body, this is my blood." Be strong then in faith, nothing doubting. Be assured, that he is faithful who hath promised; and take Christ unto you as yours, not only signified, but confirmed to you by these pledges and assurances of his favour. Nor let the apprehension you have of your very great unworthiness, prevent your expectation, that ye should not partake of the free gift of God; but, drawing near with faith, take this holy sacrament, to your comfort. May your souls be refreshed! May ye go forward, in the influence of that refreshment, from strength to strength, till ye come unto the mount of God. Yet,

3. Remember, that you have not yet attained. The new man, formed in you as he is, wants strength, growth, and vigour. You have found yourself imperfect in every particular, while I have been describing to you the new creature. But you labour to go on unto perfection. And shall not what you have already received, serve as an earnest to give you confidence, that you shall receive more from him "who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not;" who doth not grudge that we have received much already, but saith, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it?" Approach, then, with thankful boldness to this feast of fat things, this of all others the most plenteous channel where grace flows, the ordinance of Christ's appointment, wherein he con-

veys his whole self; carrying with thee these gracious words of his, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Come, athirst as thou art, for the needful supply of the Spirit, to mortify more effectually thy corruptions; to blunt the edge of all the temptations wherewith sin, the world, and Satan beset thee; to quicken thee in every way of holiness. Come with thy particular needs: what is the sin that mostly assails thee; what the lust that inveterately strives for the mastery; what the grace that is in a languishing state? Come, eat and drink to the satisfying of thy soul. Amen.

SERMON IX.

THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Shall I hope, that in the days past you have been attentively weighing your thoughts and words? This is to digest the food that is ministered unto you every Lord's day. In such a case, you must have attained to a clearer determination, from the observation and inquiry you have been making, which way you are disposed, what manner of spirit you are of, whether regenerate or carnal. Consequently, you will be now in the spirit of meekness ready for farther discovery in self-knowledge, and better prepared for improvement from what I am still to offer. But if by any it was heedlessly forgotten; if by any desperately cast by, as soon as it had been heard; if such as had seen a little what manner of men they were, in the glass then presented before them, have gone away, and quickly lost sight of the deformed appearance they made in their own eyes; or, if there were any scoffers among you, too forward to blaspheme the word of truth, and cry, "What would

this babbler say? He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange" doctrines: with the one or the other of these, how shall I almost hope for better success? It were vanity to hope it, were what we speak but the reasonings of man; but the word is God's, "mighty to pull down strong holds," and "the hand of God is not shortened;" it can seize and fix the most unsettled and careless; it can strike to the ground the most stubborn, and make the insolent persecutor cry out, "What shall I do?"

Under the influence of this might I go on to represent to you, one and another, the new creature's course of action. And this *negatively*, what he doth not do; and *positively*, what he doth.

But before I proceed to the *negative* description of the new creature, I must beg to be discharged for a season from the confinement I have hitherto, for the most part, been under, in representing the various characters of formality and carelessness. Henceforward they do so coincide, that I am not able to discern any difference. Formality shall be seen, as it is, real carelessness; and the most abandoned profligate shall be found distinguished from such a one, in degree only of carelessness. I shall not oppose to the Christian, the monster who goes into every excess of riot, and casts off all restraints, even of civility and society: but, as we shall follow the new creature only into the lesser parts of his conduct, wherein he stands singular and acts alone, so the opposition will be made in such a manner, as, while license or allowance in such lesser things shall be found to denominate an unrenewed man, there shall be room given

to reprove those who are too apt to conceit much of themselves for the sake of some religious performances, and acts of benevolence and humanity; and, of consequence, to leave the more licentious utterly without excuse.

The *negative* part of the new creature's conduct shall be illustrated in these instances:—He forbears all things which he knows to be sinful;—hath not any thing in his course, which he suspects to be sinful;—keeps from needless temptations;—doth not come under the power of any lawful thing;—labours to give no offence in any thing.

1. He forbears all things which he knows to be sinful. In this respect, his "conscience is void of offence, both towards God and towards man." For, to it he can appeal, and it will make a ready and express answer to him, and he knows nothing by himself. There is no sin in this course that he knows of; no, not the least sin, as far as he apprehends. I would not be mistaken, as if I meant he had no imperfections to lament, no sin to contend with, or that his corrupted heart did at no time gain any advantage of him. But I say, sin is not in his course, nor hath any sin allowance with him. The law in his members will be striving, will be insinuating itself into all he doth; possibly will take him, upon some extraordinary occasion, at unawares, and hurry him into a single act of compliance. But if at any time it doth so, his tender heart will be instantly stricken; he will be sadly reproaching himself, and roaring for the disquietness of his heart; shame, sorrow, and darkness, will overwhelm and

cloud him; he will be seeking peace and finding none for a season; he will assuredly judge himself the greatest monster upon earth. The real Christian is an avowed enemy to all sin: nor can the weight of prevailing example, the misinterpretations which men of looser conscience put upon things, the foolish thought that some sins are but little matters; nothing can engage him to call evil good, or to admit into his conduct what he knows God doth not approve.

If this be true, then whoever abides under the power and practice of any known sin, cannot be a new creature. Doth conscience say (and let it speak) you have about you, in your course and conduct, one, the smallest thing, which is sinful? Is it accusing you of any one point wherein you offend, which you will either allow yourself in, or else fall into customarily, that is, as the temptation to it comes in your way? Hearken to no excuses; all pretences you shall be forming are vain. Be assured, that your heart is not right, that you have not been transformed in the inner man by the renewing of your mind, that you have no part in Christ. Whatever you may have conceited from any mistaken applications of the new creature's character to yourself, in the branches of it which you have already heard, you are entirely deceived; this one sin convinces you, and casts you out. Nor cheat yourself any longer into a persuasion, that the sin you practice is not with your allowance. You may seem to be sorry for it, may stoutly resolve against it; but if you customarily fall into it again and again, plain

it is, no change hath been wrought upon your heart. You do not apprehend its deformity, your will doth not heartily refuse it; and if you will be at the pains to examine, you may easily find yourself a stranger to the feelings of a new creature concerning it; hatred big with loathing as you look at it; sorrow piercing your heart as you reflect what a monster it hath made you; and fear filling you with anxious suspicion, lest it should again overtake you. He, therefore, that is in the practice of any known sin, great or little, is not renewed. And when sin abounds as it doth this day, how many professed Christians must this one word exclude from the kingdom of Christ, and convince to be of another kingdom than his! For whosoever "committeth sin is of the devil: but whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Suffer me to add yet one word to those, who are continuing in the practice of known sin, and yet make excuse. I will suppose your sin to be drunkenness: and too much reason I have to suppose it may. You do not get drunk wilfully, you say; you are caught unadvisedly. I grant all which you mean; I allow, that you do not set yourself to get drunk; that you have no premeditated design of defying God, and making yourself a beast; that you do it, not seeing God's majesty just before your eyes, the flaming vengeance of his arm stretched out against you, forbidding you, and charging your very soul, "See thou do it not." This would be sinning wilfully with a vengeance; and yet this is

all you mean, the best excuse you have to plead. No, I suppose you have no such thoughts as these; verily, I believe you have no design to offend God upon such occasions. But your sin is wilful, nevertheless. You choose the glass and a friend. This is the prevailing bias with you: this is your will, when you can enjoy it. And doth not that inclination lead you into company suited to the purpose, and that company into excess? It is not in any design of being drunk, but in your being under the guidance of this bad inclination, that the wilfulness of your sin consists; it is because you hearken to it, and not to grace and conscience. Consider, if this be not the very case. You are overtaken; it makes you uneasy; you dread the consequences which threaten you; you are determined against it for the future: and yet, by and by, it prevails again. I beseech you, why so, if your heart be not desperately set upon indulgence, and you cannot refuse yourself the gratification which it craves? Your will is still perverse; and all the fair promises you make do but serve to deceive you. It is easy to carry this remark into any other sin which men repeatedly fall into. But I have instanced in the sin of drunkenness, because of the especial need there is I should bear testimony against it; having reason to believe, that this way of drinking and repenting of it (as it will be called,) is the practice of too many among you.

2. The new creature hath not any thing in his course, which he suspects to be sinful. This will prove a notable mark of the difference between a renewed and an unrenewed mind.

Are you one of those who go on adventurously, without fear and caution; either not at all apt to suspect, that there may be sin in many things you do; or, if you have suspicion of somewhat or other not altogether right, yet passing it over without serious inquiry, as a thing of little consequence, and what the generality do not stick at? Have you some suspicious things in your course, which you have not carefully examined; industriously turned your thoughts away from an inquisitive search into them; and some, which you cannot persuade your conscience to approve? Are you rash and hardy in this manner, your conscience not tenderly swaying you to the safer side? You may not think that your heart is changed; that you love God, hate sin, and are more afraid of committing it, than of the sorest present evil; the fear of doing what is sinful, outweighing whatever convenience or pleasure the suspected action could be able to promise you. You have no more pretence to the simplicity and godly sincerity of the new creature, than the rash youth, who drives his vessel forward without regard to rocks or sands that may be in her way, can set up for the title and character of an experienced, cautious, and good pilot.

Just the contrary to this is the manner of one who is renewed in the spirit of his mind. With him the rule stands good, "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." Whatever he suspects, he stops to search it out, bringing it to the law and the testimony: nor will do what is not determined to be allowable, any more than what he perfectly knows to be wrong.

He doth not hearken to scruples indeed, after faithful inquiry, though he still keeps his mind open to better information; but he dares not do any doubtful thing, without inquiry. Still he keeps on the safe side. He cannot clearly determine upon it: it may be sinful, for ought he knows; he cannot do amiss, if he abstain. Like a person travelling in a bad or miry road, if he see the way suspicious at any time, he turns out of it. Or rather, like an honest servant, if he suspects any thing may prove injurious to his master's interest, he avoids it, and would charge himself with unfaithfulness, should he adventure upon it. The new creature hates sin with an irreconcilable hatred; and when any thing looks doubtful; when he knows not what to make of it, whether it be sinful or not; the sacred jealousy rouses his disgust, and he "passes by on the other side." Thus he keeps his course clear; the practice of no doubtful thing clogs him; he submits not to the very suspicion of evil. He can approach in these honest sentiments: "Lord, behold thy servant; thou seest the simplicity of my heart, that I fear nothing so much as I do the offending of thee; yea, thou seest that I dare not, that I would not, adventure into the least thing which might displease thee. Holy Father, thou hast taught me to hate all evil ways; and to the praise of thy grace I will avouch it, that thou hast set me this day free from all suspected evil in my allowed course!" Looking about upon his business, his company, his amusements, he can make this appeal to the Searcher of hearts. And herein, how will

he be distinguished from those, who are neither apt to suspect any thing, nor to heed the risings of suspicion, when the conscience doubts and gives warning of sin!

3. The renewed man keeps from all needless temptations. By temptations, I mean any thing which may be the instrument of leading and drawing into sin; of seducing the heart into pride and vanity, into worldly-mindedness and dishonesty, into lewdness, drunkenness, gluttony, or idleness. Pride, worldliness, and lust, are the strong-holds of sin; and all that is about us affords continual matter for inflaming the one and the other within us. Especially apt to ensnare the heart are, eminence of any sort and being distinguished, perpetual hurry of business, a careless round of amusement in the midst of ease; and all these lie on every hand of us.

This the man, whose soul is fashioned for heaven, knows; he sees himself set in the midst of many dangers, and is afraid of all these things which are in the world. In every thing he finds a snare; and holds off, as well as he may, from whatever might corrupt the purity and integrity of his heart. He lives at a distance from riotous company and boisterous mirth; passes by the doors of lewdness; nor makes the vain person his familiar friend. He enters into business with religious fear; is content, if he be not rich; if he be, is the more afraid; nor will take more upon him, than consistently with his greater interests he can manage. He doth not set himself loose in pursuit of advancement and honour: and he will be cautious in meddling with inquiries

which are only curious. He will give as little occasion to lust, or love of the present world, or vanity, to take advantage of him, as he possibly can: and where aught looks toward sin, he will not needlessly run upon it. I cannot better illustrate the conduct of a good man, with regard to temptations, than by comparing him to a fearful person confined in a place where some pestilential disease rages. Such a one, you may well think, would not be running hazards; would cautiously avoid, as much as possibly he could, the people and the places which might give him the infection. He could not be out of danger in such a circumstance; no doubt, he must sometimes bring himself unadvisedly into danger; but it would be his greatest and prevailing care to keep himself from being infected. Just such another infected place the good man finds the world to be; sick with the pestilence of sin; and every thing which is in it, spreading the infection to those that dwell thereon. He is shut up in it; he cannot escape: but with how much peculiar and incomparable fear doth he walk, because the disease which overspreads it is so utterly deadly! He will be as little in the way of the infection as it is possible; and if he be drawn unwarily into a temptation, he will remark it for a future caution. Say, thou child of God, art thou not even thus fearful of temptations? Fearful of them, because thou fearest being drawn into sin? Every day of thy life shall witness for thee, that thou darest not venture upon needless danger; that as far as may be, and with all the prudence thou canst use, thou keepest thyself from temptation, living as

in a world infected with sin. Yes, thou fearest temptation, because thou hatest sin; because thou hast tasted the gall and wormwood there is in it; because thou grievest for the wounds it gave thy dearest Lord.

If this be thy case, how different art thou from what possibly thyself once was, from what others are! Men, who live in the midst of danger without fear, adventure, ever and anon, into temptations; nor consider, that these are the doors by which sin gains admittance: who sin, and complain of their weakness; and yet sin again, and are again self-reproved; but will not avoid the snares by which they fall. O the insincerity of these men! frail as water, and yet abiding resolutely in circumstances, where even the strength and constancy of an apostle could not but falter. Alas! my friends, why is the careless person your companion? And why are you causelessly to be found within the walls where debauchery and lust dwell? Why are you loading yourselves with cares which you cannot manage, and do not need? Why will ye be pressing so importunately after distinction, and pre-eminence, and wealth? Why all this, unless that ye are possessed with a secret craving after present gratification, and your hearts are unacquainted with seeking after, and delight in the Lord? But,

4. The true-hearted Christian doth not come under the power of any lawful thing. Hitherto we have seen him steering his course through what is unlawful, whether sin known, or sin suspected, or needless temptation. We must see now how he orders

himself in things lawful, yet capable of abuse: how wary he is that they do not hurt him; that his soul receive no damage in the use he makes of them.

It is a needful as well as lawful thing to wear decent and becoming apparel; requisite it is that we take the refreshments of meat, and drink, and sleep; it is allowed that men may use proper recreations. But, according to the manner of using them, they become hurtful or not. Easy it is to see that we may dress vainly; eat, drink, and sleep with indulgence; and both forget ourselves, and lose much time in recreation. So that it is a silly, though but too common saying, "What harm is there in such things?" Why truly, none at all in the things themselves, but a great deal in the abuse of them; or, as the apostle calls it, the being "brought under the power of them." If you dress beyond your station, puffing up your heart with finery; if you eat and drink to the pampering your body; or sleep without moderation, stupifying your soul by such indulgences; if your recreations disorder the frame of your mind, rendering you less, instead of more fit for the more serious offices of devotion and business: surely there is some harm in all this; and whoever shall indulge in the use of these lawful things, in this manner, to the evident hinderance of his soul, may be assured that he cannot be of the new creature's character. Nor tell me these are little things. If they be so, and yet you continue enslaved by them, so much a stronger evidence they become of a cold and unrenewed heart dwelling in you. In truth, little as they may seem, they keep

your soul in a ruinous state; yours, and I fear ten thousand others. To convince you, in a word, (for I must not stay to enlarge) when you will rather indulge yourself in bed, than get up to meet God in prayer, and to be about your business; and will be eating and drinking to the full, instead of "keeping your body under, and bringing it into subjection," by a moderate diet: when you are contriving your dress for vanity more than for use and decency: when you will use those very recreations which you find by experience are inconsistent with a religious turn of mind, rendering you perpetually forgetful and vain; how can you once think that you mind things above, love God, delight in keeping his commandments; that you are seeking his everlasting favour and presence through Jesus Christ; that you have the least resemblance of a miserable sinner, labouring for salvation, and pressing after the high prize of his calling, with fear and trembling, lest by any means he should come short of it?

Hear how differently the new creature uses all these things. He sleeps for refreshment only: and when that hath been obtained, he bethinks himself in such a way as this: "Away, thou ease, which wert not made for man! We must be up, my soul, to bless God for the protection of the night; to meet him with our praises in the early morning. Let us come before God to dress thee for the day. We have precious hours before us, in which we may not be idle. The glory of our God is intrusted with us, the appointed labour of life must be gladly maintained. Up then, my soul, and ask the protection

of Heaven for the renewed day! A day, which if not the last we have to live, yet which will bring us so much nearer the important eternity! A day, for the use of which we shall have need either to rejoice or grieve, when our last sleep approacheth!"—He clothes himself with decency, and for convenience. Could you see his heart, you might read there, if not these, yet some such serious reflections: "Our parent was afraid and hid himself, because he was naked; why, then, should we pride ourselves in that, which was only given us to cover our shame? Sin brought shame into the world; and that shame made raiment needful. We can have little cause to boast of that which is the standing badge of our reproach and sin. I will put you on to hide the shame of man; to remind me that I am a fallen creature. I may not be proud of you: ye might have been another's, and not mine: but thankfully, according to my station in life, I will use you as a defence, which God provided for my weak body against the heat, the rain, and the cold."—He eats too, and drinks with moderation, to preserve the health and vigour of his body, not to indulge his palate. Blessing and praising God for the supply of his good things afforded him, he "puts the knife to his throat," careful that he do not abuse the Giver in the use of them; not stupifying his senses, nor injuring his reason, nor nursing up his body for lust. He would not have his body become less serviceable, by too much or too little self-denial; but keeping a due mean, that it may be fit for, and subservient to the purposes of the soul.—His recreations also are with much con-

sultation and advisedness. Those he chooses, which are entirely innocent; such as he hath proved to be no way hurtful to the religious frame and temper of his soul. He will have none of those amusements, which shall engage all his thoughts long before they come, and leave him almost incapable of reflection when they are over; more confused and burdened than they found him. Nor will he spend much time in them: they are his little intervals of relaxation from the serious and important affairs of life, that he may return to them again with recruited and new vigour.—Thus he uses these lawful things, becomingly heedful of them and indifferent to them. And hereby, as he shows an entire contrariety from those, who live as if made on purpose to dress, indulge, and squander away time; so also, a continual and excellent testimony of the more noble and higher regards which possess his heart.

5. To complete the *negative* part of his character, as it relates to external conduct, I add in the last place, that he labours to give no offence in any thing. And how great the difference here! How clear the most convincing evidences of the renewed and unchanged heart! While the tender regard of the one bears an amiable resemblance of the love of Jesus, and the indifference of the other is but too much like the cruelty of his enemy.

You will not forbear your own way, to please or profit any: will not consider your conduct, as others are, or may be, affected by it. Nor retrench any thing of your freedom, however much your neighbour may be ensnared by the use you make of

your liberty. You do not trouble yourself to think about other people. Scripture bears the strongest testimony against the character of which you are. "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man, by whom the offence cometh. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." And why so, you will be apt to say? "Am I my brother's keeper?" I have no design of drawing him into sin; I do not bid him follow my example; nor desire that he should encourage himself in doing ill, from the innocent freedoms which I take. Nothing is farther from my thoughts than being a snare and hinderance to others. While therefore I do but follow my own humour, which every man hath a right to do in indifferent matters, why should the faults of others be thus laid at my door? For the plainest reason in the world: Because by such a conduct you give up the interests of him whom you call your Master; evidently showing no concern about his kingdom and glory; and suffering, with much indifference, Satan to gain advantage by your means. In truth, no less may be said of it, you are doing the work of Satan, however little you may design it. And judge now in conscience, if you can be the child of God! What! a child of God, and so void of all zeal for his honour, that you care not though you be the occasion that his creatures, and your brethren, disgrace and disobey him! A child of God, through Jesus Christ; and so unlike him, through whom you call

God your Father, that you will not constrain yourself in the least degree, to save those from ruin for whose sake he shed his most valuable blood! Surely, upon reflection, you cannot believe it yourself: nor is it any sort of excuse, that you have no thought of seducing men into sin, or of hardening them in it. Be it allowed, that you have no such thought; that you do but go on your own way, and follow your own humour. Truly it is the very want of thought about the matter which condemns you. This is the very thing I insist upon, as the proof of your being altogether out of the right way, and still alienated from the life of God, that you have no thought about the hurt which your conduct may possibly be doing to others, or about the snares which your use of allowed freedom may lead them into. Had you been the serious character you profess, you would both have thought of, and have directed your conduct accordingly.

For it is the new creature's manner to mind the things of others. Godly zeal and affectionate charity burn in his heart. He knows a thousand searchings of heart, for the glory of God trod down of men, and for the many souls in the road to destruction. He cannot bear there should be the least thing in his conduct, which might contribute to the lamented scene of rebellion and ruin which he sees about him: he knows not that there is any such thing; he studies that there may be none. The voice of compassion cries within him, it lifts up a sorrowful lamentation: "I am horribly afraid for the ungodly. How long, ye simple ones! What! till

death, the messenger of the Lord, arrest you, and judgment send you into hell! I am troubled for you, my brethren. Woe is me, for you, and for myself! Woe is me that I have carelessly contributed to your misery, and made your hands stronger to sin. Forgive me, children of wrath, whom I have either begotten or nourished! Alas, that I should be your ruin! How shall I almost endure to hear you sentenced at the judgment? O return unto the Lord, from whom I have led you! If I cannot prevail, yet I shall mourn over you. I will labour to do no more such irreparable wrong to God and my brother. Rather, O Lord, cut me off in the midst of my days, than leave me to propagate iniquity. Thou knowest, I have this day, through thy grace, cast off all things which offend: if any remain, they are hid from me. But if still there be with me any thing behind, which dishonours thee, or wounds my neighbour, O take it from me! Be it what it will; innocent, pleasing, or useful, I yield it up with joy." In this manner he thinks; and his conduct is directed upon this plan.—Most convincing to yourself will be the faithful answer of your conscience upon this point, that you have the mind of Christ in you.

Take now the whole together, and see with self-application the wide opposition between the one and the other, in this *negative* description.

The *unrenewed* man, as he loves sin at the bottom, so, when he knows that something sinful is in his practice, is for making excuses; will be telling you he is sorry for it, and that it is unadvisedly, or

unavoidably he falls into it. But then he is not for being suspicious; he shuts his eyes as much as possible; ye is not overforward to think there is any thing amiss with him; that this or that part of his conduct is exceptionable: and if doubt forces upon him, he hath somehow or other the art of making himself easy. He lives in the midst of temptation; neither sees, nor fears, nor flies from the snare; is secure in the midst of danger, and adventures again into the mouth of the pit into which he before had fallen. A strange faculty he hath of making blessings become his curse, while he turns even food and raiment into indulgence or vanity. No wonder if he be as regardless of others, as he is of himself. He goes on in his own way, and if others are hurt by his influence, what is that to him? let them see to that.—Altogether, is not this a bad, however common character?

But the *reformed* man is the very reverse. He doth not choose sin; his soul abhorring all evil ways. Accordingly, he hath not left one known sin in his practice: be it never so little a one; let convenience, pleasure, interest, reputation, plead for it as they will, he spares it not. Nay, but if he do but suspect sin to be lurking in any part of his conduct, (and apt he is to be suspicious, while sin is so enticing, and his heart so deceitful;) he searches it out, and clears his hands of evil without delay, not suffering, as I may say, the smell of sin to pass upon him, nor daring to act under a doubtful mind. He is as fearful of temptations, as he would be of a pestilence, and takes as much care to avoid the one, as

he would to escape the other. With a thankful moderation he uses the needful things of life; treating them as his servants, and not as his masters. He hath an heedful eye to others, as well as himself; minds his brother's wealth; endeavours, in all things, that he be not a stumbling-block to the weak; and can say of himself, in general, what the apostle saith in a particular instance: "I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." Thus he forbears. And is not this a plain, an honest carriage? Is not this to act like one born from above? You may despise such a conduct if you please, and call it what you will; but I defy you to suppress that inward desire, this moment rising within you, that you were the man.

SERMON X.

THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

The point now before us is, to produce the *positive* part of the *new creature's* conduct.

I cannot enter upon so great a thing, without calling upon both myself and you to reflect, that what we shall now hear, is no other than the carriage of a true Christian. We shall be told, what our profession demands of us; what our eternal expectations absolutely require at our hands; what the universal eye of God considers we are doing. What cause of just humiliation may this representation minister to the most pious, when they are led to remember, how unlike this excellent way their path may have often been! And what cause, too, of awakened fear to that man, who shall evidently find, from this description, that his conduct hath never been, nor to this hour is, the conduct of a Christian.

Seeing then nothing can be of greater import to

every one of us, let me entreat your attention, patience, and self-inquiry, while I lay before you the plan and scheme upon which he who is a new creature acts; the rule he proposes; the way and manner to which he would exactly be conformed, and to which he industriously labours to come up.

He lives to the glory of God. This is his plan; this the aim he hath in all his conduct. His labour is, to bring his whole course of action, every thing he doth, great or little, into conformity with this one rule. When we look at the particulars of his conversation, as we shall by and by do, all of them will be found drawing this way, and contracting more and more into this short compass. It must needs be so; because this is the sum of the whole, that which includes all—he lives to the glory of God. By which I mean, his great view is, so to frame his behaviour after God's will, that by his conformity to the divine pleasure, God may have his just and peculiar honour paid him, of being such a one's true Lord and sole Governor: at the same time also studying that, as much as in him lies, the glory of God's dominion may be extended throughout the world; his Majesty be acknowledged by the general submission of all his reasonable creatures; particularly, that the honour and interests of Christ's kingdom may be promoted. Upon this plan, he often reviews his conduct:—"Am I acting like the servant and subject of the great God, my Master and King? Am I yielding God that hearty and willing obedience, which, from the dependence we have upon his power and majesty, his goodness and mercy, his love, pity,

patience, and universal presence with us, is most highly his due? Is my life ordered, in all things, as God would have it, and in a way best suited to promote his honour? Lord, direct my steps, as may best serve thy own glory! Regard not, my God and King, my will and my inclination. However contrary to these, order all things to me in that way which may promote the glory of thy name!" Upon occasion of difficulty or trial, his greatest concern is, that the glory of God may not suffer damage; his first fear, lest he should bring dishonour upon his heavenly king. Nothing he so frequently asks himself, as "Will this dishonour God? Will not this tend to his glory?" Nothing grieves him so heartily as the thought of having brought dishonour upon the divine government. Nothing rejoices him so much, as that he hath been able to establish it. The appearance of dishonouring God, deters him from any thing he was about to do. The hope or prospect of glorifying God, does not fail to impel him to duty, though it be at the hazard of his interest, ease, and reputation.

It is a noble and generous way this; but, alas! how rarely to be met with! The herd of men is of a different stamp; wrapped up in themselves; selfish, and seeking their own ends. Woe is unto you, if you are one of these self-seekers. There is many a man to be met with, upon whom interest may have this influence to make him honest; who would not for shame be indecent. What would the world say of him, were he known to be an adulterer, a knave, or a sot, who is driven by the fear of an

after-reckoning to the church and the closet? This may be your case; and you, in the mean while, void of all concern about God and his glory in the world. What matters all this, if you have not the spirit and carriage of a servant of the most high God? If the glory of your sovereign Lord and King weighs not with you in your conduct; neither stops nor forwards you in the actions of your life? If you do not so much as reflect, whether God be honoured or dishonoured by means of your behaviour, but go on just your own way, regardless of him? Truly, in such circumstances, you are living without God, free, as it were, and discharged from his service; nor can any one be at a wider distance than you, from what the apostle enjoins us, "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." View yourself and the Christian together. He designs God's glory in his general conduct: to this excellent principle you live an entire stranger. He is apt to examine his conduct in this view: the very thought of such inquiry never possessed your breast. He sorely grieves, if his sins and inadvertencies have anyhow disgraced the cause of God: you can wound religion, and feel nothing. Fear of dishonouring God causes him to deliberate upon every extraordinary occasion: your fear is for yourself, how you shall escape censure and reproach. The opportunity of bringing honour to God and Christ gives an edge to his zeal: opportunities of this sort pass by you unseen, because all your zeal is employed for yourself and your interests. In truth, are you not a very Gallio? one who, with the

show and ceremony of being a Christian, "careth for none of these things?"

But, from this general account, I descend to a more particular exemplification of the things, wherein he who is a new creature labours to glorify God. I mention as the most material, "a due regard to divine worship—a faithful diligence in our calling —a well ordering ourselves in the relations we bear to others—a proper use, whether of our accidental or natural endowments and abilities;" which, taken together, may give a sufficient view of the Christian's well-doing.

1. He who is the new creature labours to glorify God, in a due regard to divine worship. This appears to him the most important concern in life: he looks upon nothing as being of like moment with this. Accordingly, should I tell you, that from a deep sense of the high honour the worship of God admits him to, of the noble privilege he enjoys therein, of the obligation and necessity inviting him to it, he labours to wait upon God in a truly spiritual use of all his sacred appointments; that he peculiarly esteems the Lord's day, and reverences those public ordinances wherein the people of God meet together to worship; not suffering business to break in upon the sacred hours, nor making the Sabbath a season for pleasure, visit, and impertinence; nor (which ought now-a-days much to be remarked) allowing every little matter to keep him from God's house; but waiting upon God, there to praise him, and pray unto him, to be instructed, and admonished, and enlivened, seasonably, constantly, cheerfully,

and devoutly: should I tell you, that he will gladly lay hold of any other opportunity of public worshipping, nor will be backward (if he conveniently can) to save an hour out of his necessary business for the weekly service; or at least, judging that to be a better employment, than to be doing nothing: should I say, that he allots a due portion of his time for private devotions, by no means suffering these his spiritual, and most delightful meals, to be neglected, or by every thing, and almost nothing, interrupted; should I add, that he labours to have God with him, when he hath left his closet; that he studies to hold an intercourse with him as the hours pass along, lifting up his heart to him in the little intervals of business and conversation, and returning unto him with pleasing meditation in more vacant hours: should I add, that he will be craving the blessing of God upon his necessary food, and thankfully acknowledging the divine bounty for the refreshments he hath received; a decent act of family devotion, growing unfashionable and out of practice, since the good providence of God in his daily care of us hath been forgotten or disowned, or since it hath been the custom to be ashamed of the religion, of the God of our fathers: should I say beyond this, that he will betake himself to God for support and direction, when extraordinary circumstances demand it; will be finding matter of praise and adoration in various things of nature and providence, which occasionally come in his way; that very small things, unworthy of mention, will be often leading him up to God: should I set all this together, as

that regard to God which our holy worshipper endeavours to pay, it would amount to no more than the various expressions of a thankful and dependent mind, animated with impressions of the divine nearness and presence, and than what both the precepts and examples in the Scripture enjoin upon us. Where the renewed mind is, worship is not so much a duty, as a privilege and a pleasure; there is a panting after God, a contention to be near him, to find him always, and not to lose sight of him, ever. Hence the turning of the heart to him, amidst the cares of life: hence the attendance upon him, in the stated acts of public and retired devotion: and hence, in these, a labouring after reverence, faith, delight and importunity, which are the life and spirit of worship. To worship is the good man's privilege. And it is among his griefs that he can enjoy it no better; that the calves of his lips are so spiritless, his affections so cold, his thoughts so apt to wander. He would forget the world, while he is with God; would have his sacrifices without blemish, full of heavenly warmth and uninterrupted attention; he would—but he attains not all his desire: he finds himself short of that collectedness of mind, that speaking as to God, that wrestling for the blessing, wherewith he wishes to approach the throne of grace.

But there are many in the world, who do not thus walk with God; who do not either affect or exercise the glorious privilege of divine worship. Art thou one of them, pleased with Sunday, because it is thy day of visit, dress, and idleness? Is thy de-

meanor at church thoughtless, heedless, unconstrained, as if thou hadst no part to bear in the sacred business there transacting between heaven and earth? Doth sleep, or business, or company, keep thee thence? Or, though opportunity serves, wilt thou not think of coming thither again till the Sabbath return, as if thou hadst nothing to do with the weekly worship; or were pleased, that the custom and countenance of the world gave thee a discharge from it? Art thou without a conscientious regularity in private worship; either lying down and rising up without prayer, or gladly yielding to every interruption of secret exercises? Can you feed upon God's creatures without thankfulness, and do none of the things of nature and providence present him to you? What is this, but to live without God in the world? Not actually without him, but without regarding him.

2. The living member of Christ's body labours to glorify God, by faithful diligence in his calling. And this may be noted, as a very considerable branch of true religion. This distinguishes also the new creature. The honest Christian labours in his calling, from a principle of conscience and submission to God: knowing that God hath laid it upon man as a punishment and a charge, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," till thou "return unto the ground." He who is the new creature, is distinguished as such by nothing more than by his obedience and endurance herein. Through conscience to God, in submission to his appointment, he cheerfully undertakes his labour; and in opposition to the strivings

of the flesh for ease and sloth, diligently continues under the hardships of it: in patience he seeks to possess his soul, though disappointments thwart him; and in quietness he waits upon the good providence of God for the needful blessing upon the work of his hands, thankfully acknowledging the divine bounty in bestowing it upon him. He is true and just in all his dealings; yet it is not his honesty, but the eye he hath to God in his labour, engaging him with submissiveness, diligence, cheerfulness, and patience to go through with it, which proves him to be of a sound mind. In obedience to God's will, he sets himself to his daily task. "Here," he says, "God would have me be; this he would have me doing; this is my very business, by his appointment. And my business is honourable: it is the service of God. Delightful also is this my employment; a thousand blessings attend me in it. Thus employed, my conscience is easy. Thus employed, I know no anxious fears of want. Thus employed, temptations which might seduce me in an idle hour, are away. Thus employed, I could gladly wait in the service of my God, till he change my place, till he remove me to a service above."—He is pleased, you see, with his place and his station; and he makes as much conscience to be at his work, as at proper times to be at his devotions. For, truly, he doth not labour because he cannot avoid it; but because God requires him to do it.

He is faithful as to God, so to man also, in his calling. He renders to every one that which is due.

If his time, ability, and labour, be hired, he carefully pays what his neighbour hath a just right to; and "not with eye-service, but in singleness of heart, fearing God," is conscientious to give him his time, and ability, and labour. Or, if he lives in a station more enlarged, still a sincere Christian acts a like part, and judges himself under as great an obligation to fill up his time in a useful diligence. He owes, he thinks, to the public, what a servant does to a particular master; the world makes the same demand upon his labour, ability, and time; nor can he fail to employ them usefully, without doing just such another injury to the whole body of men, as the slothful servant would in his case do to one particular.

He finds, too, that the various objects of compassion have a reasonable demand to make upon his time and abilities; not regardless of the wants of the poor, the distressed, the ignorant, of those that are oppressed, and those that are sick, he feels their complaints. He feels their piteous cries; the cry of the poor for relief, the cry of the distressed for comfort, the cry of the ignorant for instruction, the cry of the oppressed for rescue, the cry of the sick for a physician. He hears their united cry, "Labour for us!" and labours, working that which is good, that he may have to give unto him that needeth.

Could you say, "These are my views, and thus I labour;" I am ready to think, you would go on your way rejoicing. Whereas, if you are idle, and do little or nothing; either imagining you have no-

thing to do, or only so much as may be needful to supply your own necessities; you have forgotten, or never known, that you have Christ a Master in heaven, and brethren upon earth, both demanding your industrious labour. Or, if you have not conscience towards God in your calling, but work merely for the world; be industrious, and honest too, as you will, neither your industry nor honesty bespeak you approved before God. Such idleness, and such an industry, prove you a child of this world. See, how you differ from the living member of Christ's body. He labours, perhaps you are indolent; or if not, he labours in submission to God's will and appointment; you only seek your own interest in it. I will suppose both of you industrious: but your industry is selfish, it hath little respect unto others; his is charitable, it means the poor and the distressed, as well as himself. With all your honesty, you look not above the world; in all his labour, he looks down upon it.

3. He who is a new creature studies to glorify God in the relation he bears to others. I shall not be able to enter largely into the particulars. This only I say, that whether he be a son, a servant, or a subject; whether a master or father; whether a minister, or one intrusted with the education of children; or whether a magistrate, in a higher or lower rank; he hath peculiar regard to that relation; reckoning, that both God's honour, and the acceptance of his work at the day of trial, do mainly depend upon his diligence and faithfulness in it. If he be a parent, his endeavour is so to take care

of his own, that he may stand before Christ with this comfortable word in his mouth, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." If he be a minister, the awful command, "Feed my lambs," constrains him, above all things, to "give himself wholly unto them, that his profiting may appear to the saving of himself, and them that hear him." If a magistrate, he doth not bear the sword in vain, but with resolution and impartiality executes his commission, to the punishment of evil-doers, and to the praise of them that do well. If he act in an inferior relation, be a son or a servant, he forgets not that quiet submission which God hath enjoined upon him, nor who it is that hath commanded him to "honour his father and mother." To discharge the duties of his station, whatever that station be, is his singular care. While we are members one of another, he who is in Christ will labour to give that supply which is required, in the relation he bears; to give, whether beauty or strength, to the whole body. To act otherwise, to disregard our relation, is to disavow such membership; to disown union with our Head, and our brethren.

Accordingly, if a man be a haughty magistrate, puffed up with power, and making men "know who he is," as we say; if he be a minister, lording it over God's heritage, feeding himself rather than the flock; if he be one of those parents, who look upon their children as their property or their burden, and regard them no farther than as themselves may be benefited or hurt by them in their worldly

concerns; or of those, who with wicked fondness indulge them in vice; if he be an idle, unfaithful servant, or a stubborn rebellious child, who, right or wrong, must have his own humour and way; if, in his relation to others, he be perverse and selfish; sure I am he can bear no relation to Christ Jesus, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" yea, and even "to give his life a ransom for many."

4. The accidental endowments which he possesses are devoted to God and his glory. Holiness to the Lord is written upon every one of them. This Christian is a complete character. He is not like a tree, which produces fruit upon a branch or two: however low his growth, yet every-where he is fruitful. What hath the Lord given to him of money, learning, influence? In these, be they more or less, he labours to serve God; and wishes to perfect the will of his heavenly Father, in the use he makes of them all. Say, thou friend of God, dost thou not esteem these as his gift unto thee, as the talents with which he intrusts thee? Dost thou not esteem them, because they enable thee to do God and thy neighbour service? and possess them with a jealous distrust of thyself, lest thou shouldst be found unfaithful and injurious, in any abuse of them? How vain is money in thy eye, but to supply thy needs, to help forward a religious work, to succour those who are in distress! What account dost thou make of thy learning, beyond the defence of truth, and the instruction of the ignorant? And hast thou influence to any other ends, but to add weight and coun-

tenance to the cause of Christianity, to heal divisions, to establish peace, and spread happiness among those who are about thee? The humble Christian knows no value in these things beyond this; nor will allow his heart to grow vain upon such distinctions, however much his depraved nature would needs be boasting upon them, and however proud the world is of them.

But if, without any humble acknowledgment of God's hand in these matters, you are secretly puffed up because of your influence, learning, and wealth, and look down, out of your vain heart, with a sort of scorn and contempt upon those who are poorer, more ignorant, or of less notice in the world than yourself: if you use those abilities of which you are possessed to your own glory, and to bring about your own selfish ends: if your wealth is made to serve the purposes of mere idle grandeur and extravagant excess; or, through a distrust of God's providence, is unmercifully and beyond measure hoarded up, to the evident injury of those, who, as they need, so have they a title to your liberality: if you affect a character in the world, because of your learning and knowledge, and while you would have us admire your abilities, and wonder at your parts, care not that we are nothing the better for all your skill: if you use your influence to keep the little world under you, not to be approached, imperious and terrible to those who depend upon you; or priding yourself in the court they pay you, if you treat them with an affected lowliness and false-hearted compliment: if such be the estimation and use you make of those

accidental endowments which distinguish you, more or less, from your neighbours, very plain it is, that you hide your talent in the earth, that you labour not your Lord shall be benefited by it; and, therefore, that you are no servant of his.

5. In the natural gifts with which God hath endowed him, he labours to serve God. There is evidently in one man, more than another, a quickness of parts, a soundness of judgment, and a retentive memory. Consequently, some are peculiarly qualified for usefulness, gain attention, command respect, and are received with a kind of reverence, as they converse with others. The less distinguished hold such in admiration, pay them a peculiar deference, and are easily swayed into their manner and way. For it is the man of parts, rather than the man of station, wealth, or learning, that directs the world. Experience teaches how much weight such providential distinctions give, and how much those who are so raised above the level of common sense may prevail. A superior influence attends them, which every one feels himself possessed of, or submits to, as he is, or is not, of the number of those whose faculties the distributive wisdom of God hath peculiarly adorned. We may see the thing in the perverse use which is everywhere made of it. Is there not in every circle of friends a certain leader, whose office it is, for the most part, to give countenance to vice, and to laugh out of countenance the first attempt any of them shall make to escape from the practices of iniquity? His parts have set him up in this office, wherein he directs with all the insolence

of pride; giving out his determinations, which they dare not dispute, and must submit to, upon pain of his displeasure, or of being made the immediate objects of ridicule. Here the power of superior talents is seen and felt, however baleful the influence of them be; however the man of sense becomes a factor for Satan, and supports the horrid rebellion which hath been raised, and is maintained against heaven.

But when fine parts are turned the other way, what grace and ornament do they add to the whole man! What amiableness do they give to his religious behaviour; what sweetness to his Christian severity! How is he peculiarly qualified to become all things to all men, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things! How enabled to persuade and to prevail, with honest art to insinuate the love of the truth into the thoughtless, and to suppress the insolence of that mouth which is given to blaspheme! And all this ability the true-hearted Christian lays out in the sacred cause of his Master. Is he more distinguished? He is also seen a more eminent advocate for the practice and honour of true Christianity; because he is always, and in all things, devoted to the service and glory of God.

Say now, are you, or (which amounts to the same thing, as to the inquiry before us) do you judge yourself to be one, whose parts have raised you to a degree of distinction? And do you give your weight and influence to the interests of the kingdom which Jesus hath erected, seeking to support, countenance, and enlarge it, as far as that influence and weight reaches? This is the manner, without ques-

tion, of him who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Or are you as much distinguished by vanity, as you are by parts? Do you make no better use of your eminence, than to ride in triumph, leading your slavish friends after you in subjection to your pleasure? While you have so much power to direct, hath God no part in your management of others? Remember the case of Herod, when he sat upon his throne and made an oration: "The people shouted with a great shout, saying, It is the voice of a God, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." If that man was the servant of God, so are you.

To conclude, let us reflect together upon the character we have been describing, that at least we may approve it, and pay honour to the gospel and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is able to beget so respectable a creature among the fallen degenerate race of men: a person devoted to the service of his Creator, whose soul is raised to nearer views of the almighty, gracious, omnipresent Father of all things; who waits upon him in steady dependence, and pays him continually the justest homage of humble adoration and grateful praise: a man, so faithful to the trust put into his hand, as neither to be tired out of it by fatigue, nor corrupted in it by interest: one nicely attentive to discharge his relative duties; a kind, yet immoveable superior; a meek and honest inferior: a man above the selfish use of wealth, learning, and influence; evidently possessed of them

for the honour of his God, and the welfare of his neighbours: possibly a man of parts too; distinguished, but not presuming; eminent, but not haughty; with whom the ignorant may converse without fear, and from whom none shall depart without pleasure and advantage.

This is the believer, the true disciple of the blessed Jesus. I may venture to challenge the world for such another lovely person as this Christian. And O that I could say to every one of you, "Thou art the man!" But, for the most part, ye cannot, ye must not, ye dare not, ye will not. Cannot, because of the pride and unbelief of your hearts; must not, because your father the devil will not allow you; dare not, because of your interests, and of the concern you feel about your worldly reputation; will not, because of your lusts. And therefore, what, for the most part are ye? Christians indeed by name; but in practice, living without God, and without worship; either idly, or selfishly busy; haughty superiors, or stubborn inferiors; vain of your distinction among your neighbours, yet bound to the manners of your acquaintance; regardless of God and man, as of yourself; whether among them you are the voice and the leader; or whether the slave, who dare not claim the right of your own liberty, and your own conscience. Alas, sirs, the Christian, despise him as you will, pities you. I say again, he pities you; because he sees you are, and will be so miserable, when you might through grace be so blessed, happy now, and blessed for ever. His eyes gush out water for the honour

of God's law ye are setting at nought; he is horribly afraid for you, the objects quickly of unavoidable vengeance. But these things are hid from your eyes.

SERMON XI.

THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

See, how time grows older with us! We are entered upon another year. Life stands not still, no, nor the state of our souls. A large portion is again taken from our earthly days; another of our "threescore years and ten" is ended. But our souls, are they improved? What is gone in time, is it made up in grace? Have the past months added so much to our fitness for eternity, as they have brought us nearer to it? It is an awful thought, yet one year more is gone of that little while allowed me to provide for eternity. In this view, even an hour carries a solemn importance with it, and makes us feel the necessity of withdrawing our affections from a world we find so hastily passing away from us.

Try then, my friends, what treasures for heaven ye have laid up, in the year irrecoverably now gone by. What profit have we made of so much invalu-

able time? We have not been such spendthrifts, as to have squandered a whole year: we are not at farther distance from God, I would hope. The tears of Jesus were not so shed in vain: his lamentation over ruinous souls, which introduced the last year, hath not been so unheard, that again with louder cry, and more bitter tears, he hath need to lift up his voice of love and importunity: "O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" But God suffers us still; yet another year he spares us. And why? Nay, but seriously consider, one and another, why God yet upholds us in life. "It is," you cannot but say, "for his name's sake, for my soul's sake, for the sake of eternity, that I am still in the land of the living. For this cause, another race of months is risen upon me." My brethren, in this view ye do well to congratulate one another upon the new year, and to express your wishes of mutual happiness. And I, my wish and prayer for you all is, "God vouchsafe you his grace, that in this happy year ye may be clothed with the garments of salvation: that those who are asleep may be awakened, the weak among you strengthened, and the strong built up: that faith, and love, and zeal, and charity, may come and dwell abundantly in all our hearts: that, ere the year return, we may be all new creatures." O may the angels of God so have great cause of rejoicing in us! May the powerful influences of the Spirit carry into your hearts the address I am about to make you, causing it to be fruitful in you all!

Our last discourse finished the description proposed; and I might then have done with the whole subject, but I could not part with you so easily. I know that "necessity is laid upon me;" how I am charged to "preach Christ unto you, the hope of glory; warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working." I determined therefore to detain you, yet once more; to enter into serious expostulation with the careless sinner, and the formal professor, and to address a word of advice to the real Christian, who hath Christ living in him.

But how am I to rouse the careless sinner, the man at ease in Zion; to open the eyes of the formal, those eyes which will not see; or to direct the steps of the child of God? Ye thoughtless sinners, who walk in the vanity of your minds, by what way shall I be able to reach your stubborn hearts, which have hitherto stood proof against the terrors of the Lord, whereby I have so often, and so freely, laboured to persuade you; which as yet have been untouched by all the considerations of death, eternity, and a judgment day in all its awful solemnities, whereby you have been importunately dealt with; which have never felt the least constraining influence, from all the rich treasures of Christ displayed before you? How shall I impress upon you the sense of that danger, wherein ye indeed live, being under the fearful curse of the law; which only is not executed, because the most merciful God is not willing to consume you, because by his patient goodness he would needs lead

you to repentance? Ye formal professors, the Pharisees of the day, wherewith will ye be prevailed upon to renounce your most destructive self-dependence, to stand upon the level with publicans, and to sue for mercy as well as they? How shall I demolish that airy building, which your proud hearts have raised, which seems to you so goodly and so safely founded, but which the approach of death will make to totter and dissolve, and the day of Christ will prove to the assembled world to be vanity?—And ye, new creatures, who live by the faith of the Son of God; to advise you of your work, to arm you with cautions, and to supply you with every needful direction? I may well say, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Know, careless sinners, we should have no boldness to speak unto you, but that the Lord hath promised to "make his word in our mouths fire, and this people wood, and it should devour them." We should have no hope in crying to you any more, (so heedless, so hardened ye are) were not the "word of God powerful and sharp, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." Tired with calling to you in vain, we should be ready to say with Jeremiah, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name." But while "we hold our peace from good, our sorrow is stirred;" we "are full of matter; the Spirit within us constraineth us;" we cannot but speak; we would needs deliver your souls; we must deliver our own.

I speak now to the thoughtless tribe; I fear, to

very many of you: to you, unrenewed in the spirit of your mind, and yet who have been hearing, with the coldest disregard, that character set forth, which should be yours, but is not; no, not in the least particular: who may, perhaps, have been moved, at one time and another, to form some hasty purposes, which, through the vanity of your minds, the next hour hath carried away. You know, that you live in danger of instant, everlasting ruin; but you feel it not: Ah, that you did! O that this word might reach your heart! You acknowledge that you are no new creature. Do but consider what it is you own when you say so. You own, that you are not in Christ. And if not in Christ, it is no easy matter to describe the sinfulness, or the danger wherein you live. You are not in Christ; you abide therefore daily in a state of enmity against God your Maker, rebelling against his government, and usurping his right of disposing you as he will; a continual dishonourer of his great name, bidding defiance to his justice, and disregarding his eternal might. God's hourly bounties do not move you to gratitude, nor his forbearance melt you into any relenting. Mercy calls upon you, the blood of Christ cries after you, in vain: for you hear not, you despise the offers of mercy, you "tread under foot the Son of God." And if such be your state, can you sedately approve it? Or, must you not be living in the most imminent danger? Come; say what you yourself think of it. You tremble at the very thought of a departing hour. You find yourself not ready. You would not die as you live for the universe.

Should your soul this night be required; own, how gladly you would wish death might put an utter end to your being. For how terrible are your prospects beyond the grave! Should this night be your last, in what state would your soul be to-morrow? A gloomy, disconsolate spirit, gnawed by self-reflection, torn by impotent rage and malice against the arm of God, and desperate to all hope; pining under present misery, and waiting, with terrible expectation, the approach of the illustrious day of the Lord, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, to execute complete vengeance upon all those "who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, impenitent sinner, you own that such as you shall be met with by a rare and unheard-of vengeance, when the awakening voice of the trumpet shall have raised your unwilling body from its dust, when you shall be haled to an unavoidable judgment, behold the frowns of the angry Judge, and hear the tremendous sentence pronounced upon you, incomparably more terrifying than even a world dissolving in flames, about, above, and under you. You own, that such as you now are God will not spare, Jesus will not pity, Satan and hell must seize and swallow up for ever. "But stop," (you have been ready to say a good while) "I do not own this; I cannot think myself the sinful wretch you make me; I shall not inherit all these terrors." Alas! here lies the mischief; you know not your wickedness, you feel not your misery. And yet I will hope you are not past feeling. I am persuading myself you feel even now some concern about your soul:

You dare not own the charge: but dare you deny it? Bring forth your pleas and excuses. I entreat nothing but a fair hearing before your own conscience. Conscience will speak the truth, if you will suffer it; will accuse and condemn you more than I have done. But, whether you will hear or forbear, I am commanded to tell you, that God will not be mocked. And judge ye your ownselves, is it not a grievous thing, that God should send his very Son to save and bring you to glory, and you will give him no heed? Ye will not come to him, that ye might have life. No; God must condescend to your terms; leave you to the enjoyment of your lusts while you live, and then give you heaven afterwards: on no other condition will ye hearken unto him.

But, sinner, you dare not leave things as they now are with you, your soul in such ruinous circumstances. I foresee you will be doing what you have often ineffectually done already; will be resolving upon amendment; that you will make your peace with God before you die. Under the views I have now brought before you, conscience will not be easy without some such quieting resolution. But, may I presume to ask, when is this work of humiliation and repentance to begin? You will not be delaying it, I hope, to a day at an unreasonable distance, nor that so late that you shall not have leisure for so great a work. Let me suppose, then, you are resolving upon it, within the return of this year: you judge it may be done in these months, though you cannot immediately set about it. I have one word to object to your scheme: show me your grant from

heaven; let me read your name in the list of those who shall see the end of this year; and withal, your grant of grace, to put your present resolutions in practice at the time you now assign for it. You can produce no such thing; but I can bring forth much to the contrary. I can show you the graves of those who have died among us in the year past, as young and as strong as yourself. I can read to you, if need be, abundance of passages of Scripture which leave you utterly unassured of a day. I can tell you there is not one word in the whole Bible which promises you grace hereafter, if you refuse the offer now given you? You should not talk therefore of setting about this great concern a year, a month, a day hence: if you think of so short a delay as to-morrow, I will venture to assure you beforehand, that it is not to be expected to-morrow you will do it, if that to-morrow rises upon you. No; to-day, this very day, if you will hear God's voice, harden not your heart. "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation."

I know not how to leave you in such distress. Yet one word more. You are not the new creature. If you die as you are, immense ruin is upon you. O, what will you think of it an hour after you are dead? Speak no more of delays. What can possibly delay you? What mighty concern have you upon your hands, which is better than heaven; which is worth all your endless sufferings in hell? The ruin of your house, your family, your fortune; what trifles, in respect of these! What engages you this night, which is of equal importance with

your soul? Why may not this evening be given to inquiry? I will hope it shall. And when you are retired for this purpose, deal fairly; let eternal things have their proper weight, and impartially consider the condition you are in. Impressed as you now are, one serious hour may be signally blessed. Take the divine grace to your assistance; O may God largely bestow it upon you! You will be assisted by the united supplications of all faithful souls. Yes, ye true disciples, fail not this day to be instant at the throne of grace for these your brethren; strive earnestly in your prayers for them, that they may awake out of their sleep, that their chains may be broken, and they brought to rejoice with you in the glorious "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." And you, sinners, O may you date your return to God from this day! O that the entrance of this year may introduce you "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!"

I turn now to the formal professor. Man, cunning to deceive himself, and content to be mistaken in the vast concern of his soul, as though his ruin were his interest, hath found out a device at once to escape the severe doctrines of mortification and the cross, and in the midst of worldly enjoyments, to keep a certain quietness of conscience, and a sort of confidence of a title to life eternal. Such was the case of the deluded Pharisee in the parable. He had a stated course of devotion, fasting, and solemn demeanour; he exercised a measure of justice and distribution, which could not in any respect be blamed: upon this he had formed a very high and

self-pleasing judgment of the safety, and even eminency, of his state towards God: a judgment the more confirmed, because of the licentiousness of the times wherein he lived. He said no more than he thought, when with delighted self-gratulation he addressed himself to God: "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Permit me to put this speech into modern language: "What will the world do next? Surely times were never so bad as ours! People now are past all shame. They neither mind their church nor their sacraments. Sunday now is the only day for pleasure. One can hardly walk the streets for swearers and drunkards, nor go into a shop without being cheated. Well, thank God, I have nothing to do with them, I am content to go on in the old-fashioned way. With all their contrivances, they are not so easy as we who mind our duty. I would not be in their case for the world. God be praised, no one can charge me with idleness or cheating. I am glad to go to church and communion, and am better pleased to give somewhat to a poor neighbour, than to squander it away as some people do."—And when you have said this, you have said all; and will be apt to ask, what would you more? What I would more is, that you were the new creature: which, with all your freedom from the vices of the times, and with all the good things also you have to say of yourself, yet you are not. I appeal to your own conscience: you have heard the new creature de-

scribed, but not yourself, in any instance. You could not say, that you were got into this new gospel-scheme; were the humble, heavenly-minded, ready, hungering persons spoken of. You have not found that the new apprehensions, the right choice of the will, or the holy turn of the renewed affections, have suited you. You have had no part in the purity and holiness of thought and word, which belong to the new creature; nor hath your conduct been described, when his keeping from evil, and doing well, were laid out before you. You were often driven to a strait; became suspicious, could not but think, that either yourself, or I, must be mistaken, while, instance after instance, you found yourself left behind, without part or lot in the matter. Let God now judge between us; let his word be witness, without which I have said nothing. The truth is, you have the form of godliness, and I have been describing the power of it.

Mistake yourself no longer for a real disciple. You are unacquainted with poverty of spirit, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God. Comparing yourself with others, you are deceived and high-minded; hiding your sins from your eyes, you do not believe to the saving of your soul; and, blinded by your outward performances, you see not that you have not the love of God in you. You have, I confess, many fair appearances; but will God be content with these? The *life* you have not; you have seen, you have not; but if you would persuade yourself that you are the new creature, why will you not suspect a moment that it is possible you

may be mistaken? I can do no more than entreat that you will bring your state to a fair trial; that you will prove yourself, if you be in the faith. Lay aside the prejudices you have conceived in your own favour, take it into your account, that you are not to be determined by your difference from others, but by the rule of God's word; and remember how Christ hath assured us, the way of life is strait and narrow, and that there be few that find it.

O that you would submit to a fair inquiry! Truly, your very pitiable case constrains me to be urgent with you. If you are right, it can do you no harm to prove yourself, if you be in the faith. If you are out of the right way, how needful is it that you should know it! Will you allow me to help you: I will propose this leading question to you, for a serious examination to be made upon it: "Are you heartily sensible that you are a miserable, and (in yourself) a lost sinner?" If you have never been deeply convinced of this, you have been building without a foundation. I know you have had expressions in your mouth, which signify such a sense of your sinfulness and misery: but hath your heart felt what you have spoken? After the solemn reading of the ten commandments, you have called upon God to have mercy upon you, as a breaker of them all, one after another. Not only that the Lord would incline your heart to keep these laws, but that also he would have mercy upon you, and forgive the guilt which lies upon you by your past transgressions of them, even every one of them.* But now, have you lifted up this cry for

mercy from an evident sight and sense of your guiltiness and misery, as having transgressed every one of these commandments, in the spiritual, if not the literal sense? In the daily confession, and the litany, you have been calling for mercy; especially in that confession of sins at the Lord's supper, you have "acknowledged and bewailed your manifold sins and wickedness against God's divine Majesty," declaring, that hereby you have been "provoking, most justly, his wrath and indignation against you," expressing yourself in the most penitential and self-abased manner, as if "the remembrance of your sins were grievous unto you, and the burden of them were intolerable," and crying again and again for mercy. Yet, after all, you have never found yourself to be, do not this day believe that you are, this miserable sinner. And if you have never found yourself a poor lost sinner, how can you have come to Christ to be saved, or feel within you the renewing influence of redeeming love? Here, here the work must begin, in an humble sense of your sinfulness and misery. You are indeed a stranger to this; seek it, I beg you, without delay. Then, I trust, you shall quickly find the difference between formality and Christianity, and wonder how you could have been so strangely deceived.

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* The Rubric before the reading the commandments in the communion office, is, "The priest shall rehearse distinctly all the ten commandments; and the people still kneeling shall, after every commandment, ask God mercy for their transgression thereof for the time past, and grace to keep the same for the time to come."

It is time now to address a word to those of you who are new creatures. I could with pleasure resume the employment of a former discourse, and display the delightful blessings ye enjoy, and are heirs to. But, ye blessed of the Lord, who made heaven and earth, I rather call upon you to "show forth the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

See that ye live unto him who died for you, and rose again. Carry the constraining influence of the love which Jesus bears you, ever upon your hearts; carry it with you, wherever you are, and whatever you do. Approve your heart before him; let your conscience witness to you, that you are heartily his servant; that you are not "ashamed of him, and of his words, in this adulterous generation;" that you are willing to suffer reproach for his name's sake; that you desire only Christ should be magnified in you, in life and death. Go, and let your whole conduct be in correspondence with the grand design of God. "To this end, Christ both died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

Especially put on charity in all your demeanour. So shall all men know that ye are Christ's disciples; so shall the world know that God hath sent him; because they shall see him doing in you the works which none other hath done, or can do; works evidently divine: the work which the devil hath wrought in you; selfishness, pride, conceit, dissolved; and you, like your heavenly Father, patient, forbearing, forgiving, loving. "That they all," saith your

Lord, "may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Walk in love: let all your things be done with charity towards them that are without, and one towards another, and the world shall own that God is with you of a truth. By your meek, gentle, and charitable carriage, you shall do your Lord greater honour, and bring more to the knowledge of the truth, and the obedience of the gospel, than by a thousand reasonings and disputings; which, if considered to the bottom, will be seen to spring from pride, conceit, and party-zeal. And how shall you possibly succeed, while you receive weapons from Satan to fight against him? How shall his kingdom fall, when in truth it is not divided?

Hold forth the word of life. Ye are the light of the world; ye only, all the rest lie in profound darkness, bewildered by the mists of lust, pleasure, interest, pompous or learned pride. Never was a generation so refined, and so ignorant; so wise, and so faithless; so opposite, every way, to the true word of life, as this wherein you live. O let a generous compassion rest upon your soul! Rarely you shall meet a man who doth not need it. O let a sacred zeal for your despised Master reign within you! In the united force of zeal and pity, "let your light shine before men," everywhere, and in all things, "that they may see your good works."

Alas, sirs, remember, that the "gospel is hid from them whom the god of this world hath blinded;" they cannot see it. It lies upon you to show it to

them, in conversation and word to hold it forth to them. Ye are the salt of the earth, and if not by you, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

"I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." Not to have any fellowship with them, will demand all your best caution and courage, while you live among and must have so many things to do with the workers of them. But, "by the mercies of God I beseech you, be not partakers with them in their sins;" encourage not the least work of darkness. By accompanying in them, by any thing which may be interpreted a looking towards them, by the least compliance, by passing them lightly by, by the slightest approbation in word, or look, or smile, or nod, have no fellowship with them. Herein you will need a watchful eye, and a resolved heart; and the grace of God hath added both unto you. Yet reflect often how the smallest encouragement from you must strengthen the hands of wickedness, and wound the cause of religion, more than even the grossest vices of a thousand sinners.

But, I beseech you by the same mercies, rather reprove them. Let the light of your contrary example and conduct shine upon them, that they may appear to be, what they are, works of darkness, works which will not bear the light. Yea, and if the workers of them be bold enough to do them before you, use a like boldness in reproving them in plain words. Why should you not? The workers of them ought to be made ashamed of them. And if the children of darkness be hardy, why should not

the children of light be more so? Sure I am, you serve a better Master, and maintain a better cause. Yet, let all be done in the spirit of meekness and love. While ye reprove the works, have compassion on the workers; and then, fear not, the Lord is on your side.

Finally, "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more, bringing forth fruits with patience, and having in all things your conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance."

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

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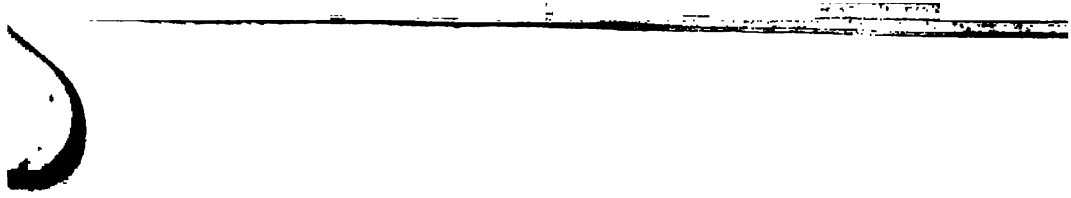

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